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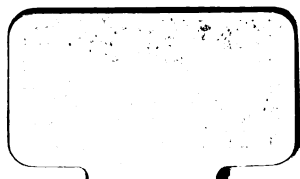
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MORBID PSYCHOLOGY.

STUDIES
ON
JESUS AND THE GOSPELS.

BY
JULES SOURY,

Docteur-es-lettres of the University of France.

[TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.]



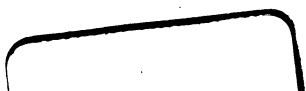
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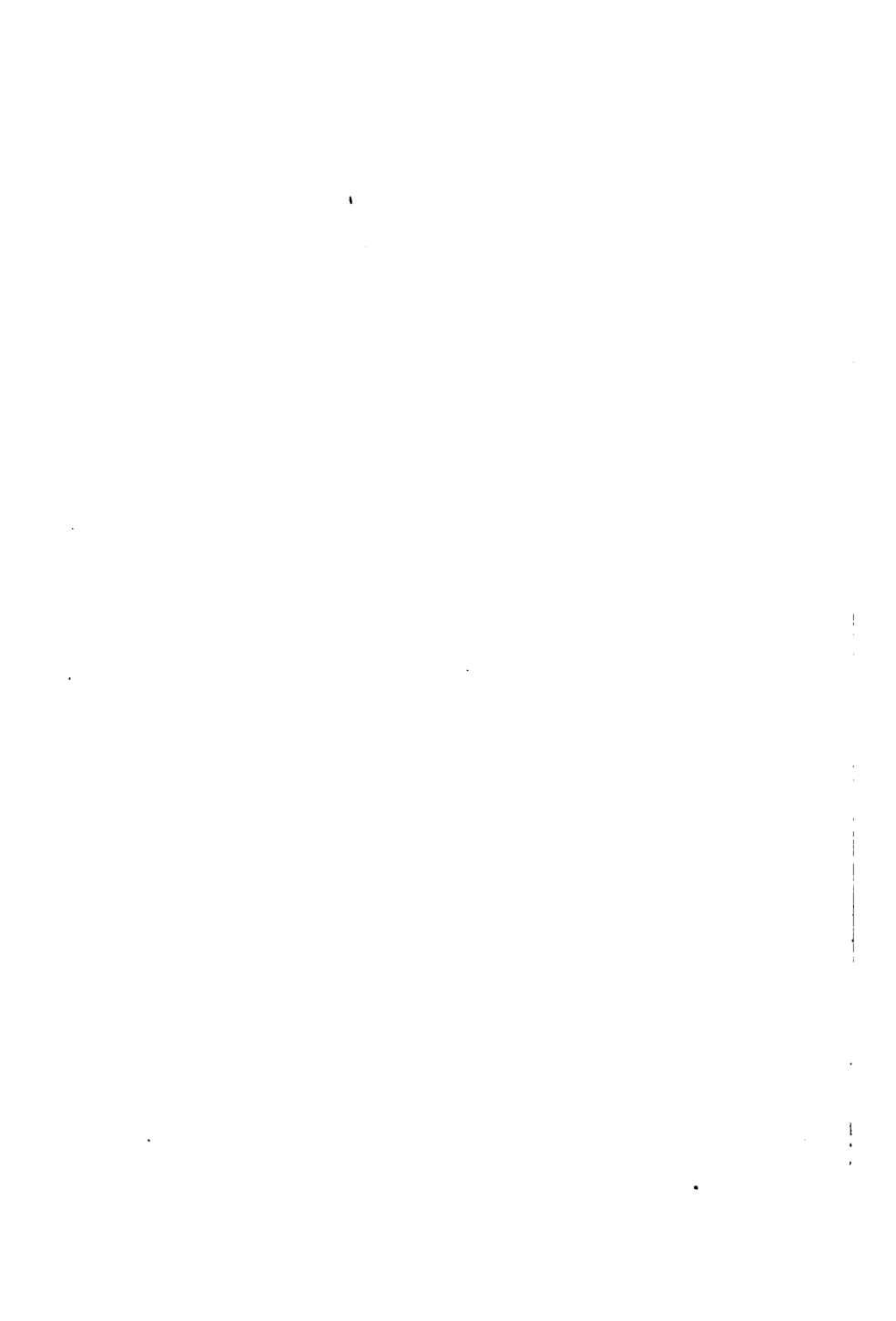
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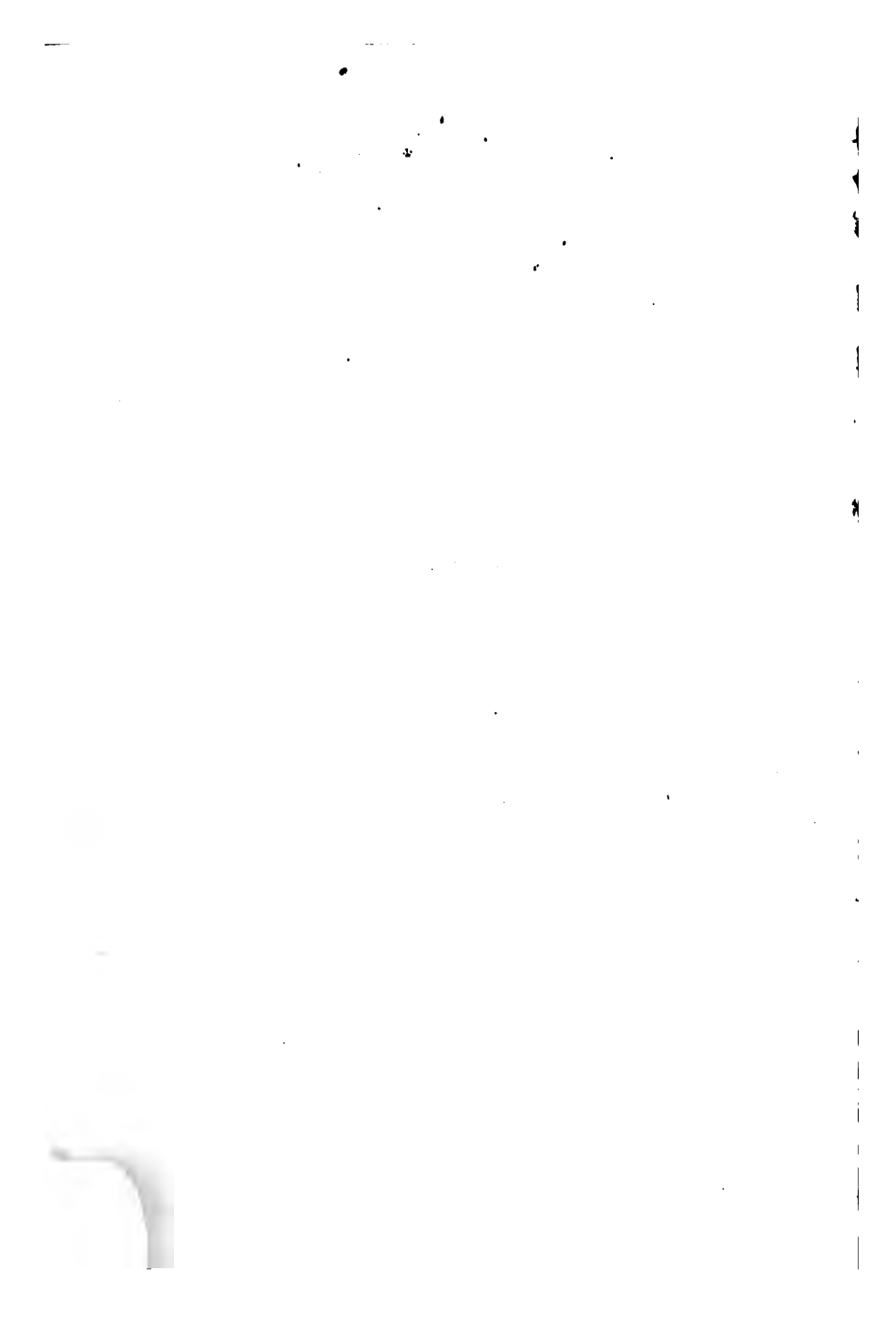
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PREFACE.

JESUS the God, gone down in his glory, like a star sunk beneath the horizon but still shedding a few faint rays on the world, threw a halo round the brow of Jesus the Prophet. In the dull glow of that twilight, in the melancholy but charming hour when everything seemed wrapped in vague, ethereal tints, Jesus appeared to Strauss and Renan such as he had shown himself to his first disciples, the Master *par excellence*, a man truly divine. Then came the night; and as darkness descended on those flickering Gospel beginnings there remained nought to be descried through the obscurity of dubious history, but, dimly-looming, the portentous outline of the gibbet and its victim.

In the present work Jesus makes his appearance, perhaps for the first time, as a sufferer from a grave malady, the course of which we have attempted to trace.

The nervous, or cerebral disorder, at first congestive and then inflammatory, under which he labored, was not only deep-seated and dangerous—it was incurable. Among us at the present time that affection may be seen daily making kings, millionaires, popes, prophets, saints, and even divinities of poor fellows whose heads have lost their balance; it has produced more than one Messiah.

If we be right in the interpretation of data which

has been followed in the study of morbid psychology wherewith the work opens, Jesus, at the time of his death, was in a somewhat advanced stage of this disorder. He was, to all appearance, cut off opportunely; the gibbet saved him from actual madness.

The diagnosis which we have ventured to draw is based on three sets of facts which are attested by the most ancient and trustworthy of the witnesses of his career.

1. Religious excitement, then general in Palestine, drove Jesus to the wilderness, where he lived some time the life of a recluse, as those who considered themselves to have the prophetic mission often did. Carried away with the idea that he was divinely inspired to proclaim the coming of the Messiah, he left his own people and his native place, and, attended by a following of fishermen and others of the same class, went about among the towns and villages of Galilee announcing the speedy approach of the Kingdom of Heaven.

2. After having proclaimed the coming of the Messiah, like other contemporary Jewish prophets, Jesus gradually came to look upon himself as the Messiah, the Christ. He allowed himself to be called the Son of David, the Son of God, and had among his followers one, if not more, of those fanatical *Sicarii*, so graphically described by Josephus, who were waiting for the deliverance of Israel from the yoke of Rome. Progressive obliteration of the consciousness of his personal identity marks the interval between the somewhat vague revelation which he made to his disciples at the foot of Mount Hermon and the day when, before

Caiaphas and before Pilate, he openly declared that he was the Messiah, and by that token the King of the Jews.

3. The cursing of the fig-tree whereon there were no figs, because "the time of figs was not yet," the violent conduct towards the dealers and changers at the Temple, were manifestly foolish acts. Jesus had come to believe that everything was permitted him, that all things belonged to him, that nothing was too hard for him to do. For a long time he had given evident signs of perversion of the natural affections, especially with respect to his mother and brethren. To the fits of anger against the priests and religious ministers of his nation, to the ambitious extravagance of his words and acts, to the wild dream of his Messianic grandeur, there rapidly supervened a characteristic depression of the mental faculties and strength, a giving way of the intellectual and muscular powers.

Each of those periods in the career of Jesus corresponded to a certain pathological state of his nervous system.

By reacting on the heart, the religious excitement he labored under and the attendant functional exacerbations had the immediate effect of accelerating the circulation, unduly dilating the blood-vessels, and producing cerebral congestion.

Chronic congestion of the brain, subjectively considered, is always attended in the initial stage with great increase of the moral consciousness, extraordinary activity of the imagination, often leading to hallucinations, and later on with absurdly exaggerated, frequently delirious ideas of power and greatness. That stage is

also usually characterised by irritability and fits of passion.

Objectively considered what is observable is hypertrophy of the cellules and nerve-tubes, excessive cerebral plethora and vascularity due to the great efflux of blood and superabundant nutrition of the encephalon. Inflammation of the meningeal covering, and of the brain itself, is, sooner or later, a further result of the chronic congestion. The vessels, turgid and loaded with blood, permit the transudation of the blood globules; the circulation becomes impeded, then arrested, with the result of depriving the cortical cerebral substance of arterial blood, which is its life; the histological elements undergo alteration, degenerate, become softened, and as the disorganisation proceeds are finally reduced to inert detritus.

The brain may remain capable more or less well of performing its functions when deprived to a large extent of its necessary food, but not so when the cerebral cellules are disorganised. Dementia consequently is the natural sequel of the congestive stage. To the destruction of the cortical substance supervenes partial or total loss of consciousness, according to the extent of the lesion. Such portions of the encephalon as continue capable of performing any duty being in a state of hyperæmia, there is often delirium more or less intense up to the last.

The process of the disorder is irregular; remissions occur during which the reasoning faculties seem to be recovered. But whether the duration extend only to a few months or to several years, the increasing weakness of the patient, the intellectual and muscular decay,

the cachectic state into which he falls, the lesions of other organs performing essential functions which ensue, bring life to a close, and frequently without suffering.

This is how Jesus would have ended had he been spared the violent death of the cross.

Whatever name be given to the disorder, whether polyparesia, meningeal encephalitis, paralytic dementia, or general progressive paralysis of the insane (for all these names have been used), it is the disease which has been described by the Calmeils, Bayles, Parchappes, Baillargers, Luys, Magnans, and Voisins. The period of congestion and that of cerebral disorganisation are merely two stages of one and the same organic *processus*, springing from consecutive derangements of the circulation, and ending in complete disorganisation of the brain.

The congestive insanity called megalomania, or the mania of imaginary greatness, is not actually this disorder, but it leads to it; and as regards their pathological anatomy the two affections cannot be distinguished in the initial stages. Alteration of the cortical substance of the brain being what this meningeal malady originates in, and that substance constituting the organ which is specially engaged in feeling, thinking, and willing, delirium as well as dementia is a symptom of it.

In so far as the disorder originates in mental causes it belongs to all countries and to every age; but in Judea at the period of the Christian era there prevailed, surging and effervescing to an extent difficult for us to conceive, those political and religious passions which

are the most prolific sources of mental perturbation and consequently of this form of alienation.

With our Christianised way of looking at things, we cannot get rid of the idea that the Biblical Messiah was a heavenly and spiritual savior sent by the Almighty to redeem mankind from the taint of Adam's transgression. But for the Jews, the Messiah, prince of the house of David, was a national and temporal hero who was to deliver Israel from the Roman yoke, and extend his political sway over all the Gentile nations.

When Jesus made his entrance into Jerusalem in the midst of his Galilean band, the common people perhaps believed for the moment that the Messiah was come. Many other Messiahs, it is true, had previously come and many more were afterwards to appear. Most of them were crucified or decapitated. Messianism was at that time ever ready to burst out and spread.

Was Jesus hereditarily predisposed to insanity? In all probability he was. What is known of his brother James hardly leaves it doubtful. Calmeil considered that he was able to trace hereditary predisposition in one third of his cases of polyparesia. We may therefore venture to suppose that among the ancestors of Jesus there had been some who were insane, epileptic, suicidal, or drunken. He did well to observe celibacy and chastity; for his descendants might have inherited, in one form or another, his predisposition to insanity.

The likelihood of predisposition having been operative, in the case of Jesus, is all the greater considering that the eminence of his moral faculties and religious genius points with more certainty to the presence of

hereditary taint. Moreau de Tours, in his immortal work, "*La Psychologie Morbide*," long ago laid down that principle which has since been received as an axiom: "The mental disposition which causes a man to be distinguished from his fellows by the originality of his mind and conceptions, by his eccentricity, and the energy of his affective faculties, or by the transcendence of his intelligence, take their rise in the very same organic conditions which are the source of the various mental perturbations whereof insanity and idiocy are the most complete expressions."*

Moreau de Tours has put in the clearest light the importance of the part played by ecstatic visions and hallucinations with most of those who have, more or less profoundly, modified the current of ideas and the course of events. We have touched but lightly on the hallucinations of Jesus, because those nervous phenomena are common to many other bodily conditions which are totally different from those of polyparesia.

In studying questions of morbid psychology, hallucinations, however, must not be neglected. To the visions of an epileptic are due Islamism, the religion next in importance to Buddhism and Christianity; and the hallucinations of Joan of Arc—that neuropathic boy-girl—were the deliverance of France.

In our own time and country we have seen two new kinds of worship founded on hallucination.† The girl who had the vision of the apparition of the Virgin of

* "*La Psychologie morbide dans ses rapports avec la Philosophie de l'Histoire*," p. 234.

† [Founders of sects and would-be founders of religions are, perhaps, as a rule, all more or less crazy. Certainly in the instances which have occurred in recent times, and of which particulars have been recorded

Lourdes was hallucinate. The heroine of the miracle of La Salette, when in the Salpêtrière Asylum, was constantly haunted with visions in the sky of the same Virgin who had appeared to her among the hills of her native country.*

with some degree of accuracy, this has been the case. Swedenborg, who, from being an eminent cultivator of science, all of a sudden became a seer, and gave himself up to preaching the new Jerusalem, would have been judiciously pronounced *non compos mentis* in his native country but for the personal intervention of the king, Frederick Adolphus. Joanna Southcott, in the second decade of the present century, who fancied that she was the woman of the Apocalypse (xii, 2) "travailing in birth" with the Messiah, was a crazy woman laboring under abdominal dropsy, whose wild ravings were taken for inspiration by a considerable body of people, and under favorable circumstances might have become the foundation of a new and permanent Church. Edward Irving, the founder of the Irvingite Church, which has not yet entirely succumbed, was a weak-minded believer in unknown tongues. Thom of Canterbury, *alias* Sir William Courtenay, whose mad pretensions to high birth, Messianic authority, and supernatural power, wherein political and religious aspirations were so curiously and, in all probability, unconsciously combined on the gospel model, some forty years ago turned the heads of the peasants of Kent and led to an abortive insurrection in which he and several of his followers met their death at the hands of the military, was a lunatic who had previously been under restraint. If unbounded faith and absolute confidence sufficed to found a religious sect, this Kentish superstition ought to have made way. The supernatural powers of the new Messiah were proved to the satisfaction of his adherents, for when he shot at a star with his pistol, the heavenly body was seen to fall into the sea. It was firmly believed by them that, if their leader was not completely invulnerable, at least he would speedily rise again from the dead in the event of his being slain. But the course of events after his death not having been propitious, the superstition died out. In the wild fanatic Laizaretti, who, so recently as the year 1878, at Arcidosso, in Tuscany, gave himself out for Christ reappeared, and was shot down at the head of his disciples by King Humbert's carabinieri, we have the latest instance of a Messianic lunatic.]

* She was then hallucinate; she is now a confirmed lunatic.

Instead of being received with incredulity and doubt the statement that hallucinations, ecstasies, fixed ideas, and irresistible impulses go often with genius, ought to commend itself to reflective minds, to whom observation will show that those phænomena are the natural consequences of exceptional mental constitution. They are, in fact, the very conditions of the accomplishment of great things, for in the state of confirmed insanity itself there are often produced most remarkable manifestations of the human mind.

As regards the disorder under which we have presumed that Jesus labored, Moreau de Tours has remarked that it is chiefly among those affected with polyparesia that there is to be observed "absorption of the personality of the individual himself into that of some other person for whom the patient had entertained great admiration, had most envied, or had taken as his *beau ideal*, or simply such as had made the deepest impression on his imagination."

He gives an account of the fits of one of those patients who was under his care at the Bicetre Asylum, and who about every three weeks got into the following state: "Cerebral congestion would come on; his face, usually pale and inexpressive, would suddenly become flushed; his eyes would brighten and sparkle. A great change had taken place; he who usually was so timid and humble, had all at once altered his mien; he was now the Pope. Hardly, however, had the cupping-glasses been applied to the nape of the neck and the blood begun to flow, when the Holy Father again became simple Big John, as he was before."

Current ideas, education, sex, age, and social position

tend to modify the insane fancies of such patients, and to determine the personages whom they suppose themselves. One will call himself a king, another the Pope, while others will be prophets or Christs, affirming that they have been sent to preach the truth and to save the world.

In the present work, as in some of our other writings, we have endeavored to show the part performed by man's physical and material organisation in the genesis of ideas and sentiments; we have set ourselves to trace the evolution and maturation of the germs of disorder which lie concealed in the human frame; we have attempted to exhibit the neuropathic origin of some of the higher manifestations of the heart and intellect.

The pathogenic history of a Messiah cannot fail to give rise to many and varied reflections. We have refrained from pursuing them in order to avoid distressing those who, in simpleness of heart, worship the ideal of their own soul, and evoke from their religion a motive for loving and doing good, finding in it, as they think, peace of mind and resignation under the afflictions of life.

We have gone no farther than to catch and note the principal features of the figure of Jesus which the Gospels give us. We have had no need to twist texts nor to invent theories. We have, in short, asserted nothing which is not strictly founded on one or more passages of Holy Writ. Our portrait of Jesus is the Gospel itself.

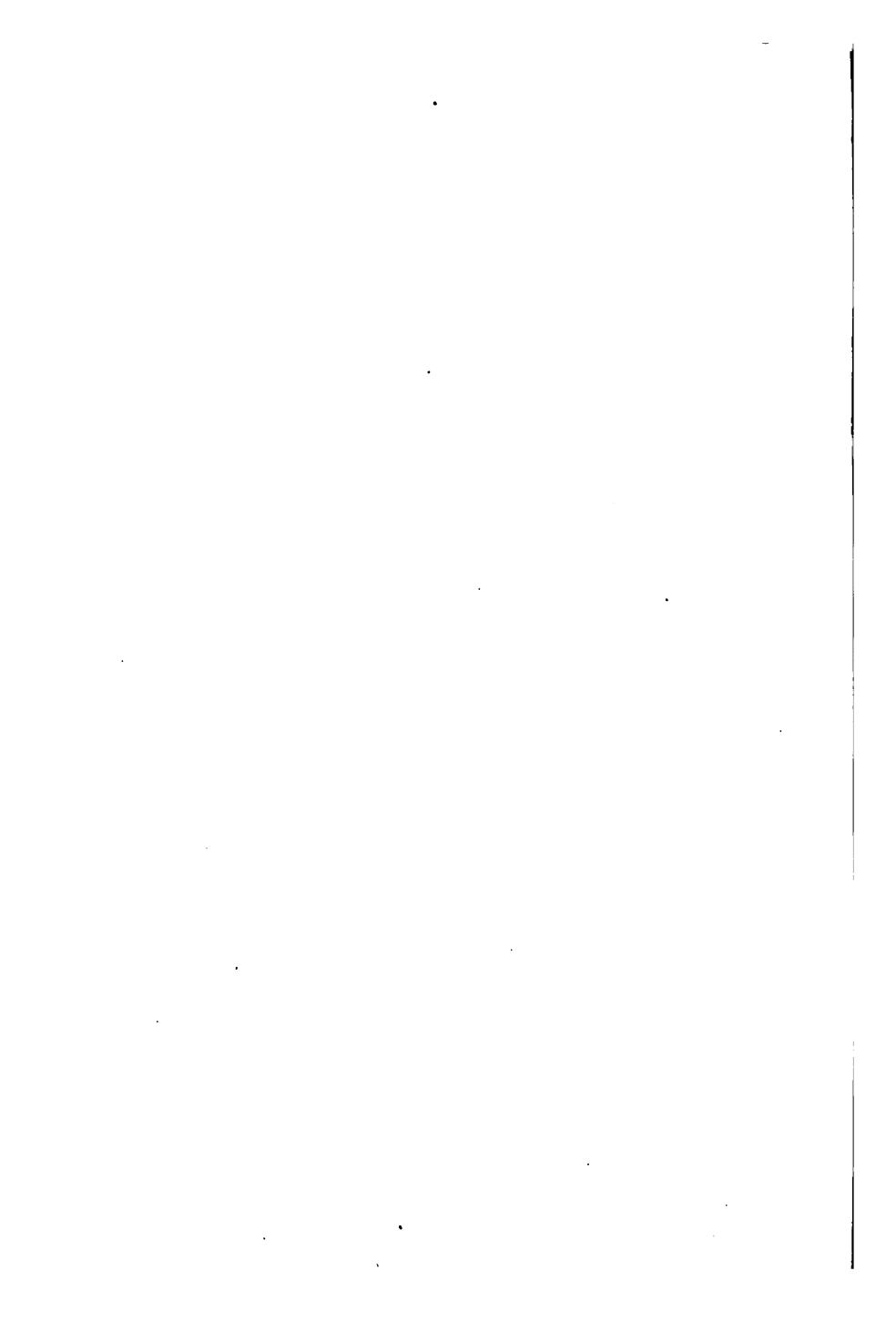
Some surprise may be felt that the ancient biographers of Jesus permitted to subsist so many traces of his manifestly morbid state of mind, and that

modern authors who have treated the subject have failed to perceive them. The reason is simple : people do not desire to hide the traces of certain acts and events till they have apprehended their import, and discoveries are hardly ever made by those who are totally unprepared for them.

Morbid psychology is founded on observations and ideas, of which the Gospel writers and other early authorities were utterly ignorant ; it did not occur to the others to remember or to be informed that saintliness and religious enthusiasm are symptomatic of cerebral lesion.

For the translation into English of the present work I am indebted to an enthusiastic friend of British nationality, whose annotations (distinguished by brackets) serve, in no small degree, to illustrate and develop my theme.

J. S.



TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

NARRATIVES avowedly fictitious are not unfrequently replete with truth. A romance may be accurate as to the actuality of most, if not all, of the doings and sayings it recounts, its fictitiousness lying entirely in the non-reality of the combinations wherein the incidents are represented; just as a composition landscape is made up of parts which have been painted from nature, although the whole scene depicted never had any real existence. The historical novel will naturally suggest itself as an instance of this; but all novels are so composed—trivial as well as those of graver import. Strictly historical or biographical compositions, on the other hand, are presumed to aim at reality in the combinations as well as in all the details both as regards doings and sayings; they are, or ought to be, in short, of the character of reports. The former may be looked upon as abstract, the latter as concrete.

What truly distinguishes works of fiction from works of the other kind is the object of the writer. The romance writer has for aim the effect to be produced on the mind of the reader—emotions of one sort or another or instruction, or again amusement combined with instruction; whereas the historian or the biographer, if true to the trust he assumes, cares only to present a faithful picture of things that have been enacted.

Works of each of those kinds, when deliberately undertaken by the writers, are definite compositions with a guarantee of responsible authorship. Whether they be fiction or fact, they are authentic works of the narrative class.

But there is yet another kind of narrative which is destitute of authenticity, having no truly personal author or authors. This is the popular tale or legend, of the nature of what has been called folk-lore, and originating with the illiterate and impersonal public, wherein the supernatural usually largely enters. As a general rule it has some measure of fact at the bottom; but the superstructure is fiction uncontrolled. Put forward as fact, that is to say as historical or biographical, and regarded by its perpetuators as such, it is in truth fiction in all but a slight foundation of fact.

The narrative parts of all the so-called Sacred Books or Bibles are of this kind.* They purport to be relations of fact, while they are really romances. Dealing chiefly with the supernatural, they cannot be else; for the supernatural, being unreal, is under the sole guidance of the imagination. Nevertheless here, as in authentic works of fiction, there is always some foundation of fact, whether phænomena misinterpreted or occurrences misunderstood, or both.

The Gospel narrative is clearly of this kind. It was originally conceived by no definite author, but was evolved among a certain section of the people of Galilee. It cannot, therefore, be correct to put the

* The chronicles of the Jewish kings which, not being truly sacred literature, were misplaced when conjoined with the Hebrew sacerdotal books, must be excepted.

question as to its character in the form of the query : is the Gospel fact or fiction ? Strictly speaking, it is fiction on a meagre substratum of fact.

Consequently, to assert that Jesus never existed is as inaccurate as to hold that the Gospels contain a faithful record of him and his career. The Jesus of the Gospels, in truth, had no existence ; but there was a Galilean of the name of Jesus who had followers, who was executed at Jerusalem, and whose career formed the groundwork of the Gospel story.

In recognising the existence of this personage, and assuming that the truest glimpses of his character are to be found in the second Gospel, M. Soury has probably adopted the soundest opinion on the subject which it is now permitted us to form.

The ability wherewith he has, as it were, disinterred the remains of the Galilean prophet from the *débris* of superstition and ignorance which have overlain them for so many ages, and the skilful manner wherein he has applied his accurate scholarship and scientific knowledge to the unravelling of the fables which had gathered over the tomb where they were laid, mark a point in criticism which is not likely soon, if ever, to be overstepped. It was this opinion formed by him of M. Soury's work, which prompted the translator to turn it into English.

PARIS, *July*, 1881.

INTRODUCTION.

I.

IF there was to be seen, going about in public at the present day, a man of harsh and unaccommodating manners, ignorant of nature and the world, absorbed perhaps from his boyhood in but one idea, which had grown with his years to the extent of choking every other—if this person, in the conviction that his career was predestined, broke all the ties whereby men are bound to family, society, and country, to life itself, and haunted by this intimate conviction, entangled himself in the dark and narrow path leading to the gibbet—if, full of faith in his mission and the hidden powers which it conferred upon him, he imagined himself capable of performing miracles, such as giving sight to the blind, energy to the paralysed, and life to the dead, and of controlling the winds and the waves—in short, if by degrees he came to believe not only that he had been sent to save the world and rescue humanity, but that, instead of being himself the man he appeared to be, he was the direct offspring of God, the anointed of the Lord, the Messiah, and in that belief defied death and its penalties, under the assurance that after death he would reappear in the clouds of heaven, come back upon the earth to open the assizes of the Last Judgment and inaugurate a new world, the Kingdom of

Heaven*—would it not be thought of such a man that under the influence, perhaps, of hereditary predisposition, intensified by solitary meditation, prayer, fasting, and ecstatic visions, he had become the subject of mental alienation ?

Far from us be the unworthy thought to fix a stigma, by the use of this expression, on those great though obscure figures like Jesus, who have so profoundly influenced mankind. Let men of good common sense, who have in horror all enthusiasm, congratulate themselves on the happy equilibrium of their minds, and contemplate with complacency, in its full bloom, their perfect soundness both of mind and body ; they are by nature incapable of comprehending what genius really is. When we follow the ordinary level roads, we are lost among the crowds who frequent them ; it is in the rugged paths of the mountain that must walk he who would leave his mark on humanity.

Jesus, as events have shown, was such an one.

* [It can hardly be reasonably supposed that Jesus actually entertained those posthumous expectations. His pretensions probably never went further than to the office of the divinely-appointed Messiah reigning in a "kingdom of heaven" on this side of the grave. Certainly the views of his disciples extended no further. Cleopas, referring to the death of Jesus, is reported to have said : "The chief priests and rulers have crucified him ; but we trusted that it had been he who should redeem Israel" (Luke xxiv., 20, 21). The idea of a Christ in the heavens coming thence to summon the whole of departed humanity to judgment had no part in the expectations of even Simon Peter the head of the apostles : "For as yet [at the sepulchre] they knew not that he should rise from the dead" (John xx., 9). That the views of Jesus did not go beyond those of his apostles and disciples is clear from his exclamation of agony, "Let this cup pass from me" (Mark xiv., 36), and his dying words, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mark, xv., 34.)]

Thrown suddenly, yet briefly and dimly, into view, as if by lightning flashes, in the courts of the Temple of Jerusalem and upon the gibbet of Golgotha, this obscure Jew, nevertheless, left an impression on the minds of those Galileans who had followed him to the capital so deep as to have subsequently become the foundation of the holy legend *par excellence*, the cultus and the religion of one of the most important sections of the human family.

So long as Jesus was universally regarded as God by the whole of Christendom, too many dazzling rays were emitted by his wounds to permit of the steady contemplation of his real character and history.

When, in the eyes of the sceptical essayists and critics of the last century, as in those of the progressionist writers of our own, he came to be nothing more than a man, the serious study of the legend of his career began. The books of the New Testament were scrutinised, with the result of resolving the evangelical narrative into a series of transpositions and adaptations of the Jewish scriptures. The redoubtable shadow which the Son of God had thrown upon the world has gradually vanished, and in its place has been displayed, in proportions no more than human, a pale and spare rabbi of Galilee.

Many, nevertheless, while giving up the divinity of Jesus, could not bring themselves to see in him a being of precisely the same nature as mankind in general. If the life and death of Socrates, they argued, were those of a sage, the whole career of Jesus was divine. According to them the prophet of Nazareth had realised the highest ideal of humanity, and if not God, he was

the most remarkable manifestation of the God-like which had ever appeared.

At the present day, to those familiar with the principles of biological science, the career of Jesus, like that of many other men of mark, is nothing more than a problem of morbid psychology.

Whatever may be the ideas of the vulgar and uninstructed as to the nature of mental sanity and insanity, science clearly shows that every eminent faculty of the mind, every striking superiority in knowledge, art, or conduct, is the result of the combined influence of hereditary idiosyncrasy and the functional super-excitement of some portion of the cerebral organism.

Complete equilibrium of the physiological functions, which is so rare, can at best only confer long life. Genius is never manifested without more or less disturbance of equilibrium. That genius, in technical language, is a *neurosis*, is no longer a matter of doubt. The flavor of ridicule which some may perceive in this proposition detracts in no degree from its truth. Might we not all, moreover, even have reason to congratulate ourselves on being neuropathic in company with Jesus, Socrates, Pascal, Newton, and Spinoza?

In the eyes of the physiologist sanity and insanity, health and disease, are not substantial entities. The greatest advance made in philosophical thought in the present age has been the substitution in all branches of knowledge of the idea of becoming in the place of that of being—in other words, no longer to consider but as a succession of states of one and the same thing that which had hitherto been taken for essentially distinct objects. Health and disease have thus resolved them-

selves into two mere modes of life, ruled by the same laws, and to be scientifically interrogated by the same methods. Reduced to their true conditions, all the various pathological states are subject to the general laws of physiology.

II.

Few questions of literary interest are more calculated to excite curiosity and inquiry than those which bear upon the origin and development of the Christian literature of the first two centuries of our era. For, notwithstanding that Buddhism has a greater number of adherents and has lasted longer than Christianity, the latter constitutes one of the foremost events in the religious evolution of humanity. During the ages of childlike religious faith, not so much as a glimpse of the history, properly speaking, of that religion could be had. In the present century only has begun the writing of that history.

Biblical studies, flourishing in France in the time of Richard Simon, were there and in all Catholic countries discredited and put down by the Roman clergy. For several centuries not a single work on Biblical subjects which is considered of any account by critical writers of the present day was produced in any non-Protestant country. In this department of human thought, as in so many others, Catholicism has brought only sterility and death. Hence the general inferiority, which although relative is none the less real, of the Catholic when compared as a whole with the Protestant nations. We must never tire of reiterating that Roman Catholicism is the compulsory

enemy of all science, the negation of all superior human culture, a permanent menace and danger for civilisation.

It was reserved for Germany to resume the interrupted noble tradition, to make of Biblical exegetical studies a German science, and to reopen the question of the credentials of Christianity.

The documents, so diverse as regards date and source, of which is made up the body of primitive Christian literature, the New Testament and the writings of the apostolical and other Fathers of the Church, are evidently compositions strictly belonging to the domain of literature, and as such must be treated by the ordinary methods of classical and oriental philology.

One of our greatest proficients in those studies, M. Ernest Renan, has taken up the problem of the origin of Christianity with rare qualifications. It would hardly be possible to find, in France at least, another possessing so extensive an acquaintance with what has been published in other countries on the subject, such a rigorous humanitarian culture, and an equal share of solid erudition, united with so much truly religious feeling. Nevertheless, Renan's "*Histoire des Origines du Christianisme*" is essentially a transition work. Strictly speaking there is, indeed, no definitive work on any subject, it being the peculiarity of good books to lead to better. It is with works of the intellect as with those of nature; such as exist have been able to come into being only by passing through earlier forms, the fossil remains of which lie buried in the crust of the earth, although but a very small number of those prior

forms have been brought to light. Incapable themselves of surviving in the struggle for existence they nevertheless possessed, in the state of rudimentary organs, instruments of conquest which, developing in the course of ages, secured the domination of their descendants. Renan, however, in many respects, has passed through the transition stage. For those who are gifted with a clear insight, it cannot be doubtful that in his conception of the subject he is with the thinkers of the remotest future ; but if in his interpretations he is with posterity, in feeling he is with the past.

We are very far from regarding this as a matter for reproach. The past had its good points ; it possessed virtues which we, perhaps, to some extent may have lost. It was characterised by a certain nobleness and generosity, and by that blind faith in the absolute which seems necessary for the rise of heroes and saints. Few, probably, recognise more distinctly than Renan the vanity of all attempts to realise chimerical ideals. But having in him the inspiration of the artist, he has the gift of putting out of sight when he so desires it and, as it were, by the aid of his enthusiasm, the grave and bitter truths which are constantly pressing themselves on the *savant*. Now that he no longer considers the fourth gospel, as he did at the time when he composed his first volume, to be a record of historical value of the life of Jesus, and that the "strict Jew" and gloomy thaumaturge of the Gospel according to Mark rises up alone before his troubled imagination, he seems desirous of turning away from the distressing vision and of effacing the effect of it

by the recollection of the mild Master, surrounded by saintly women, whom he fancied he had met in the flowery vales and among the sacred hills of Palestine.

The progress which has been made in this department of learning, as in so many others, is principally due to the fertile idea of evolution, or, in other words, to the substitution of the notion of *becoming* in place of that of *being*. The old school regarded individuals, peoples, and civilisations as entities, or as things making their appearance in the world all at once at a given time, by virtue of successive "creations," and without being part and parcel of a whole. The law of continuity was not only unknown; the principle of the organic development of physical nature and of human societies remained hidden to those *savants*, otherwise so well informed, who conceived, for instance, that species had been "created" once for all,* and that, between the mind of a Greek and that of an Assyrian, there could no more exist any con-

* ["Creation," or making, is the rudest conception that can be formed of the genesis of things, being the assimilating of that which is natural and possessed of reproductive powers to artificial objects which man fashions by superficially modifying pre-existing materials; whereas those two categories are essentially different in their intimate nature and indeed diametrically opposed. The true old school of the Græco-Roman world had, however, risen far beyond this rudimentary conception, which confounds the fleeting appreciably minute part with the everlasting stupendous whole. The doctrine of infinite evolution in and by a self-sustaining universe—the eternal becoming of all things—which, after having been lost in the Christian night of the dark ages, is now beginning to be recognised as the only consistent and tenable cosmical philosophy, was generally prevalent in the cultured society of pre-Christian Rome. What better evidence of this than the ever-popular verses of Ovid, which, thanks to surface instruction and

nexion of dependence or filiation than between an invertebrate and a vertebrate animal. To them all appeared *being*; to us everything seems but *becoming*.

The corner-stone whereon the man of the old school built the altar of his Gods and the hearth of his ancestors has been displaced. To whatever extent the past or the future may, in thought, be scrutinised, there will be perceived that eternal silence and illimitable space which struck terror into the mind of the great Pascal. The ancient conception of the universe, which, as elaborated in Chaldea, had pervaded the western world in company with the Semitic religions, to which Christianity and Islamism belong, was based on the notion of the recent origin of the earth; and the infantine fables in which this doctrine was set out were accepted by the ingenuous multitude with the same simple faith, whereby they were able,

verbal studies, school-boys for ages have conned without carrying into manhood aught of their truth:—

Omnia mutantur: nihil interit

. . . Nihil est, toto quod perstet in orbe:

Cuncta fluunt, omnisque vagans formatur imago.

Ipsa quoque adsiduo volvuntur tempora motu,

Non secus ac flumen: neque enim consistere flumen

Nec levis hora potest; sed ut unda impellitur unda,

Urgeturque prior veniente, urgetque priorem;

Tempora sic fugiunt pariter, pariterque sequuntur,

Et nova sunt semper; nam quod fuit ante relictum est;

Fitque, quod haud fuerat, momentaque cuncta novantur.

Nostra quoque ipsorum semper, requieque sine ulla

Corpora vertuntur: nec, quod fuimusve, sumusve,

Cras erimus

Nec species sua cuique maner, rerumque novatrix

Ex aliis alias reparat natura figuras.

Nec perit in toto quicquam, mihi reddite mundo;

in imagination, to wander in the shady paths of the Garden of Eden.

That the Gods of Jerusalem, Rome and Mecca were descended genealogically from one another ; that Isis, the virgin mother, had survived the ruin of her worship in that of another virgin ; that the sun and the host of heaven always were the only real divinities, from the farthest off of ages, when the aspect of the firmament awed the understanding by its grandeur ; these were truths which mankind were unable to suspect, and would have refused to credit had they been asserted.

But time, which condenses nebulae, lights up suns, brings life and thought upon planets theretofore steeped in death, and gives back ephemeral worlds to dissolution and the fertile chaos of the everlasting universe—time knows nought of Gods, nor of the dim and fallacious hopes of ignorant mortals. It is even up to this con-

*Sed variat, faciemque novat : nascique vocatur
Incipere esse aliud, quam quod fuit ante, morique
Disinere illud idem : quum sint huc forsitan illa,
Haec translata illuc ; summa tamen omnia constant.*

Ov. Met. xv.

All things are ever changing ; none whatever perish. . . . In the whole world nothing maintains its state unaltered. All things flow ever on, constantly varying in their fleeting course. Like a mighty ocean-current, time moves continually forward, incapable of an instant's arrest. Each wave pushes on that which is in front of it, being itself impelled by the wave that follows. So do the moments fly onward in everlasting succession ; for the moment which was coming becomes past without a halt, every instant of time being thus replaced. . . . Our own bodies, too, are in a state of perpetual change. To-morrow we shall no longer be what we were or now are. . . . Nor is anything, as to its species, permanent. Nature, the great renewer, successively evolves all things from out of themselves. And, believe me, throughout the whole vast universe there is nought that perishes ; all things but alter in appearance. To begin to be something different

ception that we must rise, each according to his power or bent, if we would form a true idea of the absolute unity yet supreme impassiveness of the boundless self-subsistent whole.

from what was before is called being born; and to cease to be the same thing is said to be to die. Individual things are in their nature but fluctuation; the whole only has any constancy.]

JESUS AND THE GOSPELS.

CHAPTER I.

BROADLY drawn, the following are the more prominent and characteristic features of Jesus, as they appear in the original portrait contained in the Gospels. It is more especially in the truly ancient opusculum of Mark,* the friend and companion of Peter, that the figure so portrayed stands out with the greatest distinctness—that, in fact, it rises up, as it were, with the impressiveness of an apparition.

Jesus of Nazareth came from out of Galilee to the valley of the lower Jordan, as large numbers of other Jews are reported to have done, in order to receive the baptism of John.† The crowds of believers who pressed around that ascetic, and others of the same stamp (for they were numerous in Judea), often gave vent to their feelings in a way which obliged the Roman authorities to disperse them.

We have instances of such enthusiasts in Judas the Galilean, whose sons James and Simon were crucified, like Jesus, by order of the Roman procurator, Tiberius Alexander,‡ and in Theudas, who, as befell John Baptist, was decapitated. Theudas, like John, was also a prophet who attracted crowds to the desert and to the banks of the Jordan, the waters of which, at his command, were to be divided, so as to permit the faithful

* The Gospel according to Mark is not preceded by the genealogy which has for object to connect with David and the Patriarchs the humble family of Jesus, nor by the miraculous conception, nor the marvellous birth and infancy. The reappearance after death and the ascension of the Savior are not even alluded to, for the last verses of the appendix which is tacked on to the second Gospel (xvi. 9—20) have been derived from the other Gospels.

† Mark i., 5, 9; Matt. iii., 5.

‡ Jos., Ant. Jud. xx., v., 2.

to pass the river dry-shod—this being the true baptism, which was to ensure the entrance of the elect into the kingdom of heaven. In the eyes of the Roman procurator, Cuspius Fadus, the prophet Theudas and his followers were crazy enthusiasts, against whom he sent an armed force, which dispersed the saints and slew their leader.* These religious preachers were, in fact, political agitators. In many respects they closely resembled those whom the Greeks called demagogues.

When they exhorted the multitude to penitence, prayer, and fasting, it was because the kingdom of heaven was near; in other words the Messiah, the royal descendant of the house of David, was about to appear to deliver Israel from the Roman yoke, and reign over the nations. In short, it was for the coming of the King of the Jews that these prophets prepared the way. What they ultimately aimed at, under the guise of a religious reformation, was a political revolution, and what they were pleased to style the renewal of the face of the earth. Thanks to the Jewish apocalyptic literature and its wide dissemination, it seems to have become a popular belief in the Levant that in those days there would come out of Judea a prince, a king—the Messiah announced by the prophets, who would make himself master of the universe.†

Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Northern Palestine, fearing the effect on the excitable masses of these gatherings and preachings, and that there might result from them a fresh revolt, another of those seditions (about that time so common) wherein the Jews were slaughtered without mercy, arrested John Baptist, had him shut up in prison, and afterwards put to death.‡

In its main features the story of John, who in the eyes of the authorities and the sober portion of his fellow-countrymen§ was a crazy enthusiast, like that of the other Jew prophets of the time, is the story of Jesus.

By the time when Jesus came upon the scene John had disappeared. Nevertheless, the first words in which he addressed the public were precisely those

* Jos., Ant. xx., v. 1; Acts v., 36.

† Jos., Ant. xviii. v., 2.

‡ Sueton. Vespas., 4.

§ Matt. ix. 18; Luke vii., 33.

which the ascetic of the Jordan had been in the habit of repeating—namely, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”*

Early in his career Jesus left Nazareth, and took up his quarters at Capernaum, on the western shore of the lake.† His fellow-countrymen, as often happens in such cases, despised him; the carpenter whom as a boy they had known, as well as his father, mother, and brothers,‡ had in their eyes no claim to speak to them with authority. It would even appear that on one occasion the contempt of the Nazarene population for him took the shape of homicidal hatred. When Jesus was one day preaching in the synagogue of Nazareth, the people assaulted him and expelled him, and having followed him to a precipitous hill in the town threatened to throw him down headlong.§ Perhaps on that occasion he had begun to put forward pretensions to being the Messiah, or had permitted advances in that direction.||

When the noise of his preaching, miracles, and conversions reached Herod, he regarded their author as another John Baptist,¶ in consequence of which

* Mark i., 14, 15; Matt. iv., 17; cf. iii., 1.

† Mark ii., 1; Matt. iv., 13, ix., 1.

‡ Mark vi., 3; Matt. xiii., 55—58.

§ Luke iv., 29.

|| [The prominence given, in the remarkable summary with which opens the Epistle to the Romans, to the royal descent of Jesus, (“made of the seed of David according to the flesh”) affords good ground for suspecting that pretension to kingly lineage was perhaps the earliest stage of his intellectual deviation. So common a product of weak-minded human vanity is the idle boast—ever ready to develop into belief—of gentle, noble, or royal blood, as to make it a reasonable conjecture that the parents of Jesus, and the mother probably in particular, may have suggested to him this pretension very early in life. In its milder forms, and when but vaguely and lightly insisted on, it hardly amounts to a craze; but it is even then indicative of a mental idiosyncrasy predisposing to greater aberration. That such was the starting point of the messianic pretensions of Jesus is extremely likely. History has made mention of many pretended Messiahs among the Jews, but in connexion with none other than Jesus is there notice of any positive claim to descend from David “according to the flesh.” In that respect the Nazarene pretender would seem to have stood alone.]

¶ Mark vi., 14, sq.; Matt. xiv., 1, 2. The people, at all events, looked upon Jesus as John Baptist come to life again, or as Elijah, or

Jesus was under the necessity of withdrawing to a place of safety. He thus put off for a time his tragic end.*

It was in all probability to the valley of the upper Jordan, the region known as Galilee of the Gentiles, that he withdrew. Here he would be sufficiently removed from what may be called the metropolitan districts of Galilee, namely, the country about the lake of Tiberias, wherein were no fewer than three cities having the rank of capital, within a few miles of one another—Julias, metropolis of Ituria, into which Philip, the tetrach, in the year 2 A.D. had transformed the town of Bethsaida, calling it after Julia, the unfortunate daughter of Augustus, taken to wife in second marriage by Tiberius Cæsar in the lifetime of his father-in-law; Sepphoris, capital of Galilee previous to the year 15 A.D.; and Tiberias, the new capital founded in the last-named year by Herod Antipas in honor of Tiberius, now become emperor by the death of Augustus—in the latter of which, situated, like Julias, on the lake, Herod held his court. An indication that this was the region to which Jesus retired is afforded by the place where he first ventured openly to announce himself to be the Messiah—namely, Cæsarea Philippi, otherwise Paneas, a romantic place, built, as it were, over the copious fountains wherein the Jordan has its eastern source, at the bottom of the mountain pass leading to Damascus.

Here then, at the foot of Mount Hermon, Jesus for the first time gave it clearly to be understood that he was the Messiah.† Elijah was first to come, but Elijah, he affirmed, had already come.‡ His disciples supposed that he thereby alluded to John Baptist. This announcement has all the vagueness that characterises the revelations of the sort which are made by patients suffering from what in medical language has been called polyparesia, paralytic dementia, general progres-

one of the prophets who were to precede the Messiah. Mark vi, 14—16, viii, 28; Matt. xiv., 2, xvi., 14; Luke ix., 7—9.

* Mark iii., 6, 7, vi., 30—32; Matt. xiv., 3; Luke ix., 10.

† Mark viii., 27—30; Matt. xvi., 13—30; Luke ix., 18—20.

‡ Mark ix., 11—13; Matt. xvii., 10—12.

sive paralysis of the insane, etc. There can be no doubt that the state of mind which gave rise to it was due to the intensity of the faith Jesus had in his mission. Before arriving at the stage of believing himself to be the Messiah, he must have been in the habit of preaching in general terms that the Messiah was about to come. It would only be little by little that the consciousness of his personal identity became obscured.*

A strict and austere Jew, brought up in a family of narrow, forbidding orthodoxy—as is to be gathered from the character of his brother and relations, who after his death became the chiefs of the Church of Jerusalem—Jesus held that not one iota of the law was to be abolished.†

The only member of the family of Jesus of whom we have any personal details was his brother James. Hegesippus, the very early Jew-Christian chronicler, in a passage of his writings cited by Eusebius, has drawn a picture of him of life-like intensity. This “brother of the Lord,” as he was called in the primitive Church, where he was also styled “the Just” even from the time of Jesus, “was a saint from his birth. He was never known to drink wine nor fermented beverages, and he ate no flesh. He never permitted his hair to be cut. On no occasion did he ever use the bath. He wore no linen. From kneeling so often, and for so long at a time, his knees had become horny like those of the camel.”‡

The first apostle whom Jesus had, and for whom he

* The disease whose symptoms we have, as we believe, detected in the behavior and career of Jesus, has nothing in common with the ordinary well-known forms of paralysis (hemiplegia and paraplegia)—which generally come on suddenly in full force, and are not necessarily accompanied by psychical disturbance, but is a mental affection in whose course, often of considerable duration, paralysis of all the bodily organs progressively supervenes. Jesus, according to our view of his case, did not live long enough to manifest all the pathognomic signs which are generally observed to succeed each other in this disorder; but the record of his career and conduct—record wonderfully distinct on this point, considering the object with which it was put together and disseminated—has reported precisely that concurrence of mental perturbation with muscular prostration which is characteristic of it.

† Matt. v., 17, 18.

‡ Euseb., Hist. Ecc., ii., 23: 'Ο ἁδελφὸς τοῦ Κυρίου Ἰάκωβος

would seem to have shown a marked preference, Simon Peter and the sons of Zebedee, were likewise austere Jews, practising strictly the Mosaic law. Indeed, as is seen to be the case at the present day in country districts, the pious people in the small towns and villages of Galilee would as a rule be strictly orthodox.

When he was questioned as to what were the principal articles of religion, Jesus answered, as any Jew even now would, by quoting the verses of the *Schema*, which Israelites still recite evening and morning :* "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God is the only God."

The monotheism of Jesus was absolute. For him the Mosaic law and the prophets had the importance of an everlasting revelation. The world will pass away, but the law given on Sinai will not pass away, and he who breaks the least of its commandments shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven.† He believed firmly in the resurrection of the dead,‡ and in hell, "the gehennah of fire."§ In the commencement of his career, at least, he seems to have considered that his mission was only to Israel. "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," replied Jesus on one occasion, when besought by a Canaanitish woman to cure her daughter.|| For him, as for every good Israelite, all people but the Jews were dogs.¶

Nor were his disciples to go to the Gentiles, but only to the strayed sheep of Israel.** His detestation for the Samaritans was even greater than that which he had for the Gentiles.†† In this hatred he persisted to the last, for not satisfied with keeping back his disciples from Samaria, which lay on their way on the occasion of their going up to Jerusalem, he made a circuit

* Mark xii., 28—35 (cf. Deut. ii., 4, 5); Matt. xxii., 37, as is often the case, is less emphatic.

† Matt. v., 19 (cf. vii., 12); xi., 13; xx., 37—44, &c.

‡ Mark xii., 18, sq.; Matt. xxii., 23, sq.; Luke xx., 27, sq.

§ Mark ix., 43—48; Matt. v., 22, 29, 30; x., 28; xviii., 9, &c.

|| Matt. xv., 24.

¶ Mark vii., 26, 27; Matt. 15, 26; cf. vii., 6.

** Matt. x., 6.

†† Matt. x., 5.

beyond Jordan, in order to avoid that accursed place, as was the custom with Jewish pilgrims.*

Thus Jesus of Nazareth was a true Jew, a strict and uncompromising Israelite — like his first disciples, James his brother, Simon Peter, and the sons of Zebedee—a firm observer of the law, attached to the custom of circumcision and all the Mosaic rites. He enjoined on the people, if not to imitate in all things the example set by them, at least to conform to the teaching of the doctors of the law, the austere rabbis of Jerusalem, those patterns of orthodoxy who occupied the seat of Moses.†

Even on the eve of his death he celebrated the Pascal feast, like all pious Israelites. He observed the Sabbath, fasted ‡ and prayed like John Baptist, retiring often to some solitary place in the hills or to the desert. Thus, on being baptised in the Jordan, “the spirit driveth him into the wilderness.”§ He gave himself up to prayer in the hours of the night.|| He never married, and was doubtless chaste like an ascetic. Ordinary men might marry, but celibacy was the state of grace.¶ At the resurrection there would be neither husbands nor wives.** The elect were to be like the angels in heaven—that is, of no sex. Even now, if the flesh is too weak, if the members of our body are an occasion of sin, they must be cut off.

Bodily mutilation, if not practised, was at least approved of by “the Master” and his disciples.†† Female sterility was a benediction of heaven.‡‡ As there are eunuchs which are so made in their mother’s womb, so there are eunuchs who have been made such by men, and also those who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake.§§

* Mark x., 1; Matt. xix., 1.

† Matt. xxiii., 2, 3.

‡ Mark ii., 20; ix., 29; Matt. xvii., 21. What is said in Mark ii., 18 (cf. Matt. ix., 14, 16; Luke v., 36) is not really in contradiction with our case; cf. Matt. iv., 2; vi., 16—18; ix., 15; Luke v., 35.

§ Mark i., 12; Matt. vi., 1—12; Luke iv., 1—13.

|| Mark i., 35; vi., 46, 47, &c.

¶ Matt. xix., 10, 11.

** Mark xii., 25; Matthew xxii., 30; Luke xx., 35.

†† Mark ix., 43, 45, 47; Matt. v., 29, 30; xviii., 8, 9.

‡‡ Luke xxiii., 29.

§§ Matt. xix., 12. Vulg.: *Sunt eunuchi qui seipsos castraverunt propter*

To keep the commandments and strictly observe the law was, according to Jesus, incumbent on every true Israelite. He took every occasion to speak in favor of voluntary poverty.* To sell your property and valuables and give the proceeds to the poor was the first step in the way of repentance, leading to the kingdom of God.† That this was one of the chief practical doctrines of Jesus is confirmed by the fact that the primitive church, whether at Jerusalem, Pella, or Kokaba, at whose head were his own brother and his most favored apostles,‡ was a mendicant fraternity—the Ebionites, or *Ebionim*.

The immediate followers of Jesus, the early companions of his choice, who rarely were absent from him, Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, were men of rude and contracted minds, haughty and fanatical. One of them, on a certain occasion, expressed his desire to bring down the fire of heaven upon a village where the inhabitants had shut their doors on the apostolic band.§ John and James claimed for themselves the two places of honor next the Messiah, one on the right hand and the other on the left, in the day of his glory—that is to say, they desired to be the *vizeers* of the King of the Jews.||

regnum cælorum. See, for account of the Russian castrating sect, the Skoptzy, "Essais de Critiques Religieuses," par Jules Soury, Paris, 1878.

* Mark vi., 8—10; x., 21; Matt. x., 9; xix., 21; Luke ix., 3; xviii., 22.

† Mark x., 19—21; Matt. xix., 17—21; Luke xviii., 20—22; Acts ii., 45; iv., 37; v., 2.

‡ Acts ii., 44. "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul; neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things in common. . . . Neither was there among them any that lacked, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet, and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need."—Acts iv., 32, 34, 35. "And daily they continued breaking bread from house to house, and did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart."—ii., 46. The writer of the Acts has here enthusiastically described what has the appearance of an ideal golden age of Christianity rather than anything that could have existed for more than a few days. Nevertheless it was not all a dream; there was a foundation of fact which took it out of the category of the Utopias.

§ Luke ix., 54.

|| Mark x., 35, sq.; Matt. xx., 20.

In the puerile calculations of these matter-of-fact fishermen of Gennesareth, selfish and avaricious, as so commonly are that class of people, their faith was to be substantially rewarded. In the day, even then at hand as they imagined, when Jesus would be triumphant, they, with the rest of the apostles, were to be set upon twelve thrones to rule over the twelve tribes of Israel, and in the kingdom of God then to be established—namely, the restored political Israel—were to get back one hundredfold the money and property they had sacrificed in following Jesus.*

The Master himself, though somewhat more polished and liberal, was sometimes not of the sweetest of tempers; he was subject to fits of anger. Not unfrequently he would be rude and haughty towards the sufferers from disease and infirmity who came to him; he would repulse them with harshness, sending them about their business without ceremony, so soon as he had relieved them.† His religious ardor left little room for sympathy or melancholy musings.

On withdrawing for the last time from Capernaum to look back on which place—the first wherein he had preached, and made the earliest converts—might have been expected to affect him, he consigned it to perdition, as he subsequently cursed the fig-tree near Jerusalem. Significantly shaking the dust from off his sandals, he quits the towns of his native Galilee, never again to see them. His anger breakes out into forcible imprecations—"Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes."‡

The state of chronic excitement and mental strain wherein Jesus was kept by the profound faith which he had in his Messianic mission, must have early brought about in him local or general congestions of the nervous centres. These hyperæmic manifestations would in their turn, by reaction, tend to render more intense his prophetic hallucinations.

* Mark x., 28, sq.; Matt. xix., 27; Luke xviii., 28.

† Mark vii., 27; Matt. xv., 26. ‡ Matt. xi., 20—24; Luke x., 13—15.

An indication of great value for inferring the mental condition of Jesus at this critical period is afforded by the subtlety of his reasoning, the ambiguity of the answers he returned, and the care he took to dissimulate his real sentiments, and to be always on his guard, carried even to the length of mutism so soon as he felt himself to be within the grasp of those whom he too well knew to be his enemies—the Jewish priests and Temple legists. This concurrence of fits of passion with instinctive caution, and unfailing though unconscious tact, will appear highly characteristic of his condition to those versed in mental pathology.

So soon as the presence of Jesus in a place was known, the sick and infirm were brought out. He was besought to cure them, as everyone pretending to be a prophet was expected to have the power of doing; for that was one of the principal signs of the mission of a *nabi*.* Disease being considered of the nature of a demoniacal possession, expulsion of the demon was the only effectual treatment.†

To cure diseases and to cast out demons was, in fact, one and the same thing. It had always been so, not only in Judea, but everywhere among the great bulk of the people. The means of exorcism principally consisted in certain quasi-magical forms of apostrophe. Several of those made use of by Jesus have been preserved. In his struggle with the demons Jesus was not uniformly successful; it sometimes happened that he had to return to the charge, after failing in the first instance.‡ But as a rule the evil spirits recognised in him the Son of God, prostrated themselves and adored him.§

It was even believed by the multitude that the clothing of the Master possessed the same power, and that the mere touch of the border of his robe was sufficient to effect a cure.||

* Mark vi., 56; Matt. xiv., 36.

† Mark v., 12, sq.; Matt. viii., 31, 32; Luke viii., 32, 33.

‡ Mark v., 1—20; viii., 22—26 (cf. vi., 5); viii., 12; ix., 14—19.

§ Mark i., 24; iii., 11; v., 7.

|| Mark iii., 10; v., 27—30; Matt. ix., 20; Luke vi., 19; viii., 44.

[That Jesus shared in the belief appears from his exclaiming on

Jesus was therefore a thorough miracle-worker, if ever there was one. The moral principles which he enunciated were those of the country and times wherein he lived, but his miraculous powers were his own. Destitute of even that small degree of culture which the Sadducees and upper ranks of Jewish society possessed, Jesus had the ideas and views of the lower orders of Galilee, amongst whom he was brought up and lived.* He had no more doubt about miracles than had those who required them at his hands. For dealing in the miraculous he, in all probability, had scarcely any other motive. Miracles were so much in the usual course of things that Jesus even puts himself on the same level with other exorcists, unhesitatingly admitting that persons who were not even his disciples, and without his leave, might perform miracles in his name.†

What may be called the Messianic teaching of Jesus was comprised in one short phrase, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."‡ When the twelve were sent out to spread abroad this announcement, they had conferred on them, by way of credentials, the power to cure diseases, to cast out devils, to speak in unknown tongues, to swallow poisons, and to be bitten by venomous reptiles with impunity, and to counteract all the machinations of the Evil One.§

one occasion, when his robe was touched by stealth, "Somebody hath touched me, for I perceive that virtue hath gone out of me."—Luke viii., 46. The extent and persistence of this delusion, in the ranks of society to which the Christians belonged, may be gathered from what is reported of the power of Paul's pocket-handkerchiefs and linen to cast out devils and produce cures, even when conveyed to a distance.—Acts xix., 12. Paul does not seem, however, to have given his immediate followers the benefit of this property of his body-linen, for he was obliged, on account of the illness of his disciple Trophimus, to part company with him, "leaving him sick at Miletus."—2 Tim., iv., 20. If Paul really possessed the miraculous powers which he claims in certain passages of his writings (Rom. xv., 18, 19; 2 Cor., ii., 12.), this was somewhat unkind.]

* Mark ii., 16; xi., 11; xiv., 3, etc.

† Mark ix., 38; xiv., 22; Matt. xii., 27; Luke xi., 19; ix., 49.

‡ Matt. x., 7.

§ Mark iii., 16; vi., 7, 13; xvi., 17, 18; Matt. x., 1, sq.; Luke ix., 1, etc.

It has always been the fate of those to whom the power of working miracles has been attributed to be more feared than beloved. The credulous and superstitious people who ran after Jesus on his arrival among them were often well pleased when they saw him take his departure. After certain miracles they sometimes displayed downright fright, beseeching him to be off.* On one such occasion it was whispered that he had made a pact with Satan, that he had intercourse with the powers of darkness, and cast out demons by complicity with the prince of demons, the Devil.†

"He is possessed by Beelzebub," said the solemn doctors of the law in long robes, the scribes and Pharisees with wide phylacteries bound round their brows and sleeves—punctilious and suspicious, formalists in religion, enemies to all innovation, and who in every prophet saw a heretic. In spite of their pious hypocrisy and assumed mildness of manner, Jesus had no sympathy with these self-important individuals, trailing conspicuously the tails of their mantles. With the eye of an inquisitor they took stock of the young prophet, ironically expressing their admiration for his audacity in permitting himself to be addressed as the Son of David, the Son of God, as if preparing the way for assuming the character of the Messiah. For Jesus hardly any longer protested when he was publicly addressed by those names. No doubt the Pharisees made some allowance for the illusions and wild ideas which seemed to be gradually getting a faster hold on his heated brain; but, while taking into account his youthful enthusiasm and ardor, they were perhaps only all the more desirous of shutting his mouth. Had they been successful in silencing him, Jesus would not have had occasion, before Caiaphas and Pilate, to use words which, seditious to a degree for the Roman authorities, must have struck on the ears of pious Israelites as fearful blasphemy. The disciples began to feel that Jesus was losing his head;

* Mark v., 17; Matt. viii., 34; Luke viii., 37.

† Mark iii., 22; Matt. xii., 24; Luke xi., 15.

perhaps even he himself had a vague consciousness that such was the case. At all events, it is evident that he had no longer control over himself.

At this terrible crisis of his life Jesus was not abandoned by his family. Those good people went after him from Nazareth to Capernaum for the purpose of taking care of him. "He has gone out of his mind," said his mother and brothers on coming up with the crowd at the door of the house where Jesus was.* They sent into the place for him to come out, but he refused to join them. Had Mary and the brothers of Jesus succeeded in persuading him to accompany them back to their home in Nazareth, the prophet and future Christ might in all probability have ended obscurely his days, chained up in some cellar or outhouse of the carpenter's dwelling, like the madman of Gadara of whom we read in the Gospel.†

* Mark iii., 21, 31—33. Ἐλεγον γάρ οὗτι ἐξέστη. Vulg. *Quoniam in furorem versus est.*

† The notion that a lunatic like the demoniac of Gadara (Mark v., 2, sq.)—that a confirmed madman, who for years had been wandering about the country half naked, and who, when caught and chained up, would in his fits of fury break the chains that bound him, and do violence to himself with whatever came to his hand—that such a hopeless maniac should have been restored to health by means of a few words of exorcism addressed to the supposed devils within him, could never for an instant have been entertained except by those utterly ignorant of the constitution of the human body, as theologians, to whatever Church they may belong, almost always are. What do these dealers in empty forms of words know of the anatomical and physiological conditions wherewith are connected what they are pleased to call soul? Have they ever made any observations whatever on madmen? Have they studied the lesions characteristic of the various forms of lunacy which are revealed under the microscope on *post mortem* inspection? What matter to them the physical states of the nerves and brain observed in those who have fallen victims to the paralytic or any other form of dementia? They, forsooth, cannot understand how the human mind and its highest manifestation, the reasoning faculties, can be mere functions, dependent for their due exercise on the condition of the tubes and cellules of the nervous system. They have been known, it is true, to hesitate in believing that Jesus was able to cure instantaneously an inveterate skin-disease such as leprosy. But madness is quite different—that is a simple affair! The mere touch of a sympathetic person might suffice to cure that. Professors of theology and spiritual philosophy, such as these, who have confidence in the "moral treatment of the insane," and do not hesitate to recommend it for grave affections of the cerebrum in others, take very good care

The mental condition of Jesus is attested by the most ancient and trustworthy evidence. There can be no doubt that he was always considered by his own people to be odd, difficult to control, and hard to understand.* In their eyes he had evidently not turned out well. Of a constitution apparently delicate and ailing, Jesus weakened himself still further by the prolonged fasting which was so common among the people of the Levant, and which was sometimes rewarded with ecstatic and apocalyptic visions. During the long fast to which he subjected himself in the desert after his baptism by John, Jesus, like Luther, had an interview with the Devil, and thought himself surrounded by strange beings and the angels of heaven.† On one occasion he saw Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning.‡ Whatever may have been their exciting cause, these are hallucinations which would warrant a modern alienist doctor in predicting, with more or less certainty, the course and fatal termination of the mental derangement under which he was suffering.

That which perhaps gained for Jesus his posthumous pre-eminence was the timeliness of his death. When, surrounded by his band of Galilean followers, he made his somewhat theatrical entrance into Jerusalem, and fatigued and hungry, found himself at Bethany, near the city, under a fig-tree in full leaf, he cursed it because it was without fruit, although "the time of figs was not yet"§—when he took upon himself to create a tumult in one of the courts of the Temple during the busy hours of the day—when he boasted in public that he would destroy the Temple and build another in its place in three days, to say nothing of the hard language with which he pursued the priests and scribes, Jesus gave sure signs of mental alienation.

to rely on something else when they themselves have a headache. But it is not by means of verbal formulas that softened and degenerated tissues are to be restored. No laying on of hands will arrest capillary hæmorrhage or meningeal exudation, nor will any amount of anointing with consecrated oil renovate nerve cells in the condition of organic detritus.

* Cf. Luke ii., 50.

† Mark i., 12, 13.

‡ Luke x., 18.

§ Mark xi., 12, 14—Ὁὐ γὰρ ἦν καιρὸς σὺκων; Matt. xxi., 18, 19.

What puts the character of those acts beyond dispute is not their violence, but their absurdity.

One of the exterior courts of the Temple, that of the Gentiles, contained money-changers' shops and a sort of live meat market as well as a skin market. This court was closed by a stone balustrade, surmounted at intervals by pilasters bearing inscriptions in Greek and Latin, intended to warn strangers against passing beyond.*

We are naturally inclined to conceive of the Temple of Jerusalem that it was a place of retirement and prayer, analogous to our own places of worship, dimly lighted and solemn. The religious sanctuaries of the middle ages that were objects of pilgrimage, or, perhaps better still, the great Mahommedan *Harams*, would give a more correct notion of the Temple of Jerusalem and other such sanctuaries celebrated in antiquity. The public went thither in crowds to offer sacrifice and hold festival. To Jerusalem, with those objects, and particularly at the period of the year when Jesus went, came vast multitudes, not only from throughout Palestine, but from all parts of Asia, from Egypt, Cyrene, Greece, and Italy. The Mecca *hadj*, or even that which still takes place annually at Jerusalem itself, afford very good examples of what the ancient pilgrimages were. During the festival traffic and amusement always claimed the first place. These gatherings at certain holy cities were, in fact, great fairs. All competent authorities are agreed that during the Paschal and other religious solemnities at Jerusalem the courts surrounding the Temple were filled, by rule and rightful custom, with a noisy crowd intent on traffic and the news of the day, whether political or of general social interest.

"Everywhere clamor and tumult," to quote from a high authority; † "Levites going and coming in the service of the sanctuary; Pharisees in groups discussing questions of rabbinical interest; priests and legists holding forth in the second-court halls until

* Jos., Bell. Jud. V., v. 2.

† Le Temple de Jérusalem. Par le Comte M. de Vogtlié; Paris, 1854.

the meeting of the Sanhedrin ;* farmers and peasants bringing the first fruits of their land side by side with well-to-do townspeople leading a spotless lamb, or perhaps a bullock ; the leper, in performance of the rites of purification, jostling, on the crowded steps, the uneasy husband bent on putting his wife's fidelity to the test of the 'bitter water.' Under the wide porticos of the second-court, as reconstructed and left by Herod, a motley crowd would be pressing round some popular rabbi ; hawkers of pigeons, cakes, and sweets recommending their wares ;† priests turning their skins and hides into coin ;‡ money-changers§ offering orthodox pieces|| for the Imperial and Greek coins stamped with effigies which the sacred treasury refused. This vast tumult of traffic, spouting, and pious observances was drowned by the blowing of the Temple horns, the lowing and bleating of victims led to the shambles, and the crackling of the altar fires, whence rose clouds of smoke, spreading far and wide the odor of burning fat and roasting meat."

We thus see that money-changers were required to furnish people from a distance with the orthodox coin, which the Temple treasury would alone receive. To precipitate on the stalls of those necessary traffickers a band of rough Galileans, overturning their counters, scattering their coin, knocking about their customers, was, on the part of Jesus, nothing less than an absurdity.¶

There always had been located in the annexes of the Temple of Jerusalem, as was also the case with other great sanctuaries of antiquity, dealers in oxen, sheep, pigeons, doves, oil, incense—in short, all such articles as were indispensable to pious Israelites desirous of offering sacrifices. When Mary, for instance, came presenting her infant Jesus at the Temple, it was clearly from such dealers that she purchased the pair of pigeons which the Jewish women, by traditional usage,

* Cf. Luke ii., 46. † Mark xi., 15 ; Matt. xxi., 12. ‡ Levit. vii. 8.

§ Mark xi., 15 ; Matt. xxi., 12.

|| *Recherches sur la Numismatique Judaïque.* Par F. de Souley, pl. viii. and ix. ; Paris, 1854.

¶ Mark xi., 15 ; Matt. xxi., 12 ; Luke xix., 45.

offered at their "churching."* To attack with a whip of knotted cords the Temple purveyors† and their live stock-in-trade was another absurdity.

So soon as he was out of sight of his opponents, the priests and legists, Jesus gave way to fits of anger against the orthodox Jews, calling them "reptiles," "a race of vipers," "sons of hell,"‡ and heaping on them all manner of maledictions. He would seem no longer to have had any doubt about the speedily approaching end of the world. He announced to his terrified disciples that in that day the sun and the moon would be hidden, the stars would fall from out of the heavens, the roaring of the sea would be heard from afar, and that then he himself would make his appearance in the clouds in all his glory, preceded by the angels, blowing aloud their trumpets, and awakening the elect to gather them from the four corners of the heavens.§

The Jewish prophets of this period appear to have been, sometimes, given to boasting of their power to perform prodigies of a kind similar to that with which Jesus had threatened the Temple.|| Josephus, the historian, speaks of a prophet who, when on the Mount of Olives, whereto he had been followed by a great crowd, gave out that on his uttering certain words the walls of Jerusalem would fall, and the city gates be rendered useless for ingress and egress. Felix, who was then Procurator of Judea, found it necessary to call out the military against him and his followers, with the result of slaying four hundred, and taking prisoners nearly as many.¶

It is evident that the threat pronounced by Jesus against the Temple was not only blasphemous in the eyes of the Jews, but that it was calculated to give offence to the Roman authorities, who, as we have just seen, had thought themselves obliged to adopt summary measures in the case of a prophet who made use of a similar boast.

* Luke ii., 24 (cf. Levit xii., 8; xiv., 22; xv., 14, etc.)

† Mark xi., 15 (cf. John ii., 15).

‡ Mark xii., 38, sq.; Matt. xxiii., 1—39; Luke xi., 37—52.

§ Mark xiii., 24, sq.; Matt. xxiv., 29—31; Luke xxi., 25, sq.

|| Mark xiv., 58; Matt. xxvi., 61; Acts vi., 14.

¶ Jos., Ant. XX., viii., 6; Jos., Bell. II., xiii., 4; Acts xxi., 33.

The Zelotes (*kaundim*) or Jew *communards*, whose religious fanaticism, as was so commonly the case in Judea, was combined with political hostility to Rome, almost daily struck down with the poinard some one of their fellow-citizens known to be favorable to the Romans. A reign of terror was on the point of being inaugurated. One of these Zelotes, a disciple of Judas of Galilee, the declared enemy of the Romans, whose sons had been crucified, was among the followers of Jesus, and actually recognised as one of the apostles.* The fact of his having attached himself to Jesus proves that in his eyes the Nazarene prophet was the Messiah, the expected deliverer of Israel from the yoke of Rome. The apostles, the general body of disciples, and the multitudes who, following Jesus, cheered him as the son of David, the Savior, expected, with a faith which the death of Simon and his brother had failed to extinguish, that he would make an end of the Roman dominion.†

The expectation of the rising up of a Messiah was an inexhaustible source of seditions in Judea. Thus, when brought before the high priest Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin council, Jesus said, "I am the Messiah"‡ —that is to say, the King of the Jews; and when asked by the Roman procurator in open court whether he were in truth the King of the Jews, he still made answer, "Thou has said it" (the truth).§

Demagogue and revolutionary, blasphemous and seditious, according to the laws of his day and country, Jesus, on two counts, had incurred the penalty of death.

In mock parade he was, according to the Gospel account, actually saluted King of the Jews; he received the purple, the crown, the sceptre, and even the ironical prostrations of sham courtiers.|| Perhaps, as is

* Mark iii., 18; Matt. x., 4; Luke vi., 15; Acts i., 13.

† Luke xxiv., 21.

‡ Mark xiv., 62; Matt. xxvi., 64.

§ Mark xv., 2; Matt. xxvii., 2; Luke xxiii., 3. The political nature of the charge is clearly defined in Luke xxiii., 4. In Pilate's eyes Jesus was distinctly giving himself out as "the King of the Jews" (Mark xv., 9), "the Messiah" (Matt. xxvii., 17).

|| [It is almost certain, however, that the mocking of Jesus was

sometimes observed in cases of paralytic dementia, Jesus in a vague manner took for serious this funereal masquerade. The superscription "King of the Jews," which published on the cross itself the offence for which he was condemned to death, conferred on him in derision that title for a few hours, during which those who passed by, reading it, shrugged their shoulders with indifference or contempt.

never really enacted on the occasion of his condemnation by Pilate; for an incident with which it completely corresponds is related, in one of Philo's writings, as having happened to Herod Agrippa. When that prince, in the first year of the reign of the Emperor Caligula (38 A.D.), proceeded from Rome to Palestine to enter on his government, he went by the way of Alexandria and made a stoppage at that port. On his presence in the city becoming known, the mob, who took pleasure in party demonstrations, got up a sort of *charivari* against him and one of the means they employed to annoy him and his co-religionists in Alexandria was to represent him in mimicry holding a sham court. Philo's account runs as follows: "There was a certain poor wretch named Carabbas, who spent all his days and nights in the roads, the sport of idle children and wanton youths; and the multitude, having driven him as far as the public gymnasium, and having set him up there on high, that he might be seen of everybody, flattening out a papyrus leaf, put it on his head instead of a crown, and clothed the rest of his body with a common mat in place of a robe, and in lieu of a sceptre thrust into his hand a reed, which they found lying by the wayside. And when he had received all the insignia of royalty, and had been dressed and adorned like a king, young men bearing sticks on their shoulders stood on each side of him in imitation of guards, while others came up, some as if to salute him, and others pretending to plead their causes before him."—Adv. Flacc. 6: Philo's Works, Eng. tr. by C. D. Young (Bohn series) vol. iv., pp. 68, 69.

But for the extraordinary similarity—identity indeed in all except the initial letters—in the two names it might have been permitted to explain the resemblance between Philo's relation and the story of the mocking of Jesus (Mark xv., 7, 20; Matt. xxv., 26—31) after his substitution for the robber Barabbas, wherewith it in fact forms but one incident, by supposing that this kind of mockery was anciently a traditional and customary way of ridiculing royal pretenders and might very well have been enacted both at Alexandria and Jerusalem. The circumstances, however, that in both stories there is not only a mockery of royalty, a substitution, and a wretch, but almost identity in the names of the two wretches—Carabbas in the one case and Barabbas in the other—renders it hardly possible to resist the conclusion that there was a literary connexion between the two relations—that Philo's story was applied to Jesus and introduced into the Gospel by way of embellishment. This is rendered all the more certain by reason of the consideration that a disorderly scene such as both narrations describe,

Mary, the mother of the crucified Messiah, was not at the cross, nor indeed on the scene.* The Galileans had dispersed, the disciples hidden themselves, the apostles taken to flight.† Only a few half-crazy women, who had followed Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem, saw from a distance the death agony of the "Prophet of Nazareth."‡

His last and most pathetic words, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—words the most authentic of any in the Gospel, because reported in the

which might very well become the Alexandrian mob, was totally out of keeping with the sobriety and dignity of a Roman court of law, and especially of so elevated a tribunal as that of the procurator or governor-general of the province. It may perhaps have been due to the desire to keep out of sight this connexion that in the third Gospel the substitution of Barabbas is given without the mocking, and in the fourth the mocking without Barabbas. Philo's book, "*Adversus Flaccum*"—must have been penned some considerable time previous to 55 A.D., in which year, when, as the author reports, his hair was grey, and the reign of Claudius past, he wrote his latest work, "*Legatio ad Caium*." Whatever was the time whereat the particulars of the mocking of Agrippa were imported into the Gospel narrative, it would be after the latter had begun to be reduced to writing, and was no longer a mere oral tradition.]

* Mark xv., 40, 41; Matt. xxvi., 55, 56; Luke xxiii., 49.

† Mark xiv., 50.

‡ [Jesus is reported to have lingered an unusually short time on the cross, inasmuch that Pilate "marvelled if he were already dead."—Mark xv., 44. After six hours of suspension, he cried with a loud voice and gave up the ghost. This was not the sudden breaking down of a man—much less a God—in a sound state of mind, but the moral and physical prostration of polyparesia. Highly significant symptoms had previously manifested themselves. The mortal agony which overcame Jesus at Gethsemane and the debility which prevented him carrying his cross were sure indications of the setting in of the state of cerebral and muscular deterioration wherein terminates the fatal disorder under which he labored. The degree of weakness which is implied by inability to carry the cross has been concealed by the inaccurate estimate that is usually formed of what the convict condemned to crucifixion was required to carry. It was not the entire gibbet, which would have been too great a burden for one man, but only the cross-piece, called patibulum, that was carried—the upright stake, which was by far the heaviest portion of the apparatus, being a fixture, and kept permanently standing. Indeed, the obligation to carry the cross to the place of execution was not imposed on the criminal as a painful labor physically intensifying his punishment, but rather as a sign of abject submission entailing shame and humiliation, like the fetching to the master by the culprit schoolboy of the rod wherewith he is to be caned.]

vernacular*—afford a glimpse of the extent of the deception wherein ended his Messianic career, and clearly manifest how far he himself was from having foreseen the wonderful results which were to flow from the visit to his tomb of those same half-crazy women, and the ghost-story which they there originated, and which, by seeming to confirm the delusive pretensions that had brought him to the stake, formed the real starting-point of the dogma of the divinity of Jesus.

* “*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacthani!*”—Mark xv., 34.

CHAPTER II.

IT was in the minor Churches of Pella and Batanea, beyond Jordan, where many from the mother Church of Jerusalem had taken refuge, that the Gospel took its rise, among the *ebionim* and family of Jesus. At first it consisted of one or more collections of sayings, parables, and discourses in the style of the Buddhist *sutras*, which gradually assumed the character of a tradition, and were handed down from mouth to mouth in the Galilean vernacular. Of such compositions among the Jews we have an instance in the collection of sayings of celebrated rabbis called *Pirke-Aboth*, so that this first cast of the Gospel might very well have been called *Pirke-Jeschu*. There was not yet any biography of Jesus;* the scenes and incidents

* [When it is remembered that the very earliest independent allusion to the Gospel story which we possess—namely, the reference made thereto by Paul in the First Epistle to the Corinthians (xi., 23—5, xv., 3—8)—is a short sketch of the concluding part of Jesus's career, and that in not even one of the fourteen epistles attributed to Paul does their author once quote from any discourse of the Master, although on three occasions he cites the words of Gentile authorities, it would seem reasonable to assume that the narrative part of the Gospel was put into shape and written down quite as early as the other portion. It is true that in the Acts (xx., 35) Paul is represented as having, in an address delivered at Miletus, made a quotation from the words of Jesus—namely, "It is more blessed to give than to receive;" but no such saying is to be found in any of our Gospels. There are many reasons, indeed, for thinking that the real kernel of the Gospel, in its literary as well as doctrinal aspect, was the crucifixion of Jesus, and the events immediately preceding and following it, in connexion with which there would appear to have been hardly any sayings to record, for the only words given in the synoptics, except the utterance from the cross, are, "Thou hast said it." It cannot be doubtful that those events were the things which Paul had in his mind when he enjoined upon the Thessalonians to hold fast to the "traditions" that they had been taught, whether by word or the apostle's epistle (II. Thess. ii. 15, iii. 6.) But it must be conceded that those

connected with his preaching, miracles, and death were too vividly impressed on the minds of those who had seen and heard him. It was in this remote community, with the brothers and disciples of Jesus as its nucleus, that the Nazarene legend was formed.

There has been found in this circumstance a reason for assuming that our canonical Gospels present us with a faithful portrait of Jesus. Not only, however, were none of the Gospels committed to writing at this date nor in this locality, but the conception of the lineaments to be portrayed had to pass through the minds of the Jew-Christians of Syra before reaching the actual Evangelists.* The accounts that have come down to us, in those Gospels, of the life and words of the Master are consequently only the recollections, more or less distinct, and the varyingly accurate ideas of but some of the disciples. Other religious conceptions, moreover, utterly foreign to the Christian synagogues of Batanea, were introduced into the primitive legend, as we know to have been the case in the Churches of Rome and Asia Minor.

In the eyes of the *Ebionim* and Nazarenes, strict observers of the law, followers of the circumcision and

words seem to imply that very little of the Gospel had been at that time committed to writing.

It is, however, hard to conceive of the reduction to definite shape of a collection of anecdotes or of discourses, among a people making habitual use of writing, without the intervention of notes of some kind. These would be in the form of short scrolls or leaflets, which, in the formation of any collection, would be brought together and worked up in a variety of ways, according to the locality and other circumstances of the collector or redactor; for it is evident that the dissemination of such separate scrolls would not be uniform. Traces of such distinct scrolls subsist in the paragraph-marks of some copies of the "received text," and even in the "authorised version."]

* [Before, indeed, it reached the writers to whom is due the Greek form wherein it was cast, the Gospel had to pass entirely out from among the brethren and immediate disciples of Jesus, inasmuch as to become a truly Hellenistic composition, with perhaps but a slender foundation of fact. We should probably exaggerate the extent to which this was the case if we founded our estimate on the scantiness of the traces of Galilean vernacular—the only tongue known to the Gospel actors—which have been preserved; but we should not greatly do so, for the total disappearance of the original Aramaic evangel is a circumstance of much significance.]

the rites and ceremonies of the Jews, Jesus remained the son of Joseph. He was none the less a man for being a prophet, the elect of God, the promised Messiah of the race of Abraham. On the other hand, among the Gentile or Greek Christians, in the churches founded by Paul, the "man of Tarsus," "the enemy," as he was called by the *Ebionim*, Jesus became more and more the incarnation of the Deity which he is represented to be in our Gospels.*

* [In this transformation a large part must be assigned to the religious ideas and doctrines which prevailed, on the one hand, among the Hellenist Jews and proselytes to Judaism, and, on the other, among the Gentile communicants in the Isic, Mithraic, and other spiritual mysteries, who were exceedingly numerous in all the Roman provinces from the time of Julius Cæsar to the conversion of Constantine.

In the writings of Philo Judæus of Alexandria, which date from about 20 to 55 A.D., the entire terminology of Pauline Christianity is to be found, as well as the distinct statement of the Johannine trinity—namely: (1) God the Father, (2) God the Son and Word, (3) God the Holy Spirit, who, by indwelling in man, makes them first sons of the Word, and then sons of God (Philo, *De Sacrif.*; Bryant, *Philo's Sentiments concerning the Word*, p. 205). The doctrine of Apollos, also of Alexandria, who is mentioned in the Book of Acts (xviii, 24—28), as an independent preacher of the "things of the Lord" and the "way of the Lord," was evidently in almost everything the same as that which Paul of Tarsus taught. The principal source of this pre-Christian Christianity was Alexandria, between which place and Tarsus an immense trade was carried on, leading naturally to intercourse of every kind.

The familiarity of early Christian society with the Isic mysteries was so great as to have caused the Egyptian myth of Isis, Osiris, and Typho to be appropriated by the writer of the Apocalypse, the twelfth chapter of which reads like a paragraph of Plutarch's book, "*De Iside et Osiride*."

An appropriation in favor of Christ, which Gentiles in general, but especially such as had become proselytes to Judaism, were particularly prone to make, was that of the mystic attributes of the redoubtable judge of souls in the realm of the departed. The habit the Jews had of disguising the political character of their Messianic aspirations by a religious veil, of hiding the anointed temporal savior in the ostensibly spiritual Christ, by taking them into the region of apocalypses, oracles, and mysteries, must have often been sufficient to suggest this appropriation. Among the Romans and Greeks, as among the Egyptians, the distinctive title of the judge in Hades—a title not given to the celestial Gods—was *Bonus*, *ΧΡΗΣΤΟΣ* (*Chrestos*), in Egyptian the hieroglyphic character, *Nofri*, "the good," "the excellent," with the sign of divinity; and this title was conferred on those who left his dread tribunal justified, and who then became *ΧΡΗΣΤΟΙ* (*Chrestoi*), "the good," "the just," "the saints." In Pagan Greek sepulchral epigraphy of all ages,

At what period were the parables and other sayings of Jesus committed to writing? Down to the middle of the second century they continued to be cited with considerable variation. "The Gospel texts which we possess existed," says Renan, "but along with them other texts of a similar kind." It was not till after the death of the Apostles and destruction of Jerusalem, about the year 75 A.D., that, according to the same authority, the sayings of the Master and the Gospel quotations from the prophets were reduced to writing in the district of Batanea. What was the Hebrew protevangel which was current for several ages among the Jew-Christian sects of Syria, and in which the Church Fathers found much resemblance with the Greek Gospel bearing the name of Matthew? It has often been conjectured that the latter was a translation from the Hebrew. But Renan has very well pointed out how the correct statement—"The Hebrew Gospel of the Syrian Christians resembles the Greek Gospel known by the name of Matthew"—underwent modification, and came to be, "The Syrian Christians possess the Gospel of Matthew in Hebrew," or "St. Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew."

and particularly in the inscriptions found on the kind of monument styled *Ἡρώων*, the most constantly recurring epithet for the defunct hero or saint is *ΧΡΗΣΤΟΣ*, the usual formula of invocation being *ΗΡΩΣ ΧΡΗΣΤΕ ΧΑΙΡΕ* (*Heros Chreste chaire*) (Boeckh., Vol. IV., *passim*).

There was so little, if indeed any, difference in pronunciation between the two words, "Christos" and "Chrestos," that the one would naturally be very often taken for the other. This might be assumed, without proof, to have been a common occurrence. But we possess direct evidence that, among the public in the Roman provinces where Greek was spoken, the Christians themselves wrote Chrestos as often as Christos when alluding to Jesus. In the Greek Christian epigraphy of the pre-Constantinian age the name is very rarely, if at all, found in any other form than *ΧΡΗΣΤΟΣ* (Chrestos) or *ΧΡΕΙΣΤΟΣ* (Chreistos), while in the total inscriptions of all ages wherein the word "Christian" occurs it is in one-third written Chrestian (Boeckh., *Corpus Inscrip.*, Vol. IV., *Inscr. Christ*). Tertullian (*Contr. Gent.*, 3) and Lactantius (*Div. Inst.*, iv., 7—5), moreover, distinctly state that the Christians were, by the general public, styled Chrestians: "*Etiam cum corrupte a vobis Chrestiani pronunciamur*"; "*Exponenda hujus nominis ratio est propter ignorantium errorem cum immutata littera Chrestum solent dicere.*"

That the identity in sound of the two words was made use of as a popular argument in favor of the tenets of the Christian sect we learn

Renan appears to believe in the antiquity of the Gospel of the Hebrews, whereof Hilgenfeld has collected the fragments. But the more general opinion at the present day is that that Gospel is only an Aramæan remoulding, in a Jew-Christian spirit, of our Greek text of Matthew, into which have been introduced Judaising traditions, implying, of course, the prior existence of the extant synoptics and the Pauline epistles. The Gospel of the Hebrews, according to this view, was composed in the second century in some Syrian district for the use of Jew-Christians. Papias and Hegesippus are reported by Eusebius to have been acquainted with it, so also were the author of the pseudo-Ignatian epistles, Clement of Rome, and Origen. It was the Gospel which Jerome found among the Christians of Aleppo. But in whatever place, whether Kokaba or Rome, and in whatever tongue, whether Aramaic or Greek, the Gospel was first produced, when it did come to be written, the plan and the framework, the book itself as it were, was already in shape. Just as the life of a Buddha would, in Eastern Asia, be composed on a set plan, so the career of the Messiah existed among the Jews traced ready to hand.

from passages in the writings of Justin, called "The Martyr" (Apol. I., 4), Clement of Alexandria (Strom. II., 4), Tertullian (I. Apol. adv. Gent., 3), and Jerome (in Gal., v., 22), wherein it is argued that the name whereby they were called, containing (by a pun) the word "Chrestos," "good," "excellent," ought to be a recommendation of those described by it: *Χριστιανοὶ γὰρ εἶναι κατηγοροῦμεθα, τὸ δὲ ΧΡΗΣΤΟΝ μισέισται οὐ δίκαιον;—Αὐτίκα οἱ εἰς Χριστὸν πεπιστεύκοτες ΧΡΗΣΤΟΙ τέ εἰσι καὶ λέγονται.*

Such being the case, it is evident that the Jewish Christos, when presented to them in the character of the Savior Messiah, could not fail to be taken by large numbers of the Gentiles for the God whom they held in so great reverence, the supreme judge of departed souls—among the Greeks and Romans "Αδης, Pluto the "good God" *par excellence*, ΘΕΟΣ ΧΡΗΣΤΟΣ, and among the Egyptians Hosi-On-nofri, Osiris the "Goodness of God Manifest" (Plutarch, De Is. et Os., 42). Whatever attributes belonged to the latter were consequently transferred to the former. That they were such as would fully account for Jesus coming to be "more and more regarded as the incarnation of the Deity" will clearly appear from the words of one of the most eminent, and certainly the soberest, of Egyptian mythologists, Sir Gardner Wilkinson: "He (Osiris) appeared on earth to benefit mankind, and after having performed the duties he had come to fulfil, and fallen a

Even after Strauss's exhaustive "Life of Jesus," which is based on that view, much is to be learnt from the erudite and polished pages of the French critic, wherein, by making a particular study of the Jewish *agada* literature (and the Gospel writers are true agadists), their author has laid bare the exegetical process whereby almost the entire legend of Jesus was evolved from the prophetic texts of the Old Testament. Persuaded that Jesus was the Christ, his adherents laid to his account all the passages in the books of the prophets which seemed to have reference to the Messiah and his coming. All the acts of Jesus must, as they supposed, be done in fulfilment of the prophecies.

Hence the formulæ, *iva*, "to the end that," and *ὅπως πληρωθῇ* "that it might be fulfilled." Thus were answered in Jesus the expectations of a large number of his fellow-countrymen. The Jews have styled *midrasch* this style of exegesis, wherein ambiguities or equivocations of all sorts, metaphors taken literally, and even playing upon words or punning, are admissible. Jehovah, in Hosea (xi. 1), had said, "Out of Egypt have I called my son." It was of Israel, evidently, that this was meant. But, by the *agadic* process, the words were applied to Jesus, and he was made to go into Egypt when a child, in order that he might fulfil the Scriptures by coming out of that country. For the Jew *agadist*, whether a follower of the law or a convert to the new faith, everything was matter for analogies.

sacrifice to Typho, the evil principle, he 'rose again to a new life, (Plut., De Is. et Os., 35), and became the judge of mankind in a future state. The dead also, after having passed their final ordeal and been absolved from sin, obtained in his name, which they then took, the blessings of eternal felicity" ("Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians," Vol. III., p. 69; Lond. 1878).

In short, it might with truth be said that the deification of Jesus was to a very great extent due to a pun, whereby was conveyed to Christ the meaning and significance of Chrest, but a pun which could only have originated or been appreciated among those familiar with the Greek or Hellenist forms of speech and the Gentile religious tenets, such as proselytes to Judaism, and the Hellenist Jews of Alexandria and the Levant in general. The process of thought by which this was more or less unconsciously accomplished was one of true *agadic* logic. That it was also truly evangelical is shown by the parallel case of the

These analogies came in most opportunely for the filling up of gaps in the record. Let us take, by way of example, the death of the traitor Judas, which is the subject of one of the happiest chapters of Strauss's "New Life of Jesus."* There are two accounts of this incident—one in the first Gospel, the other in the Book of Acts. Although in almost every respect different and contradictory, both are founded on 2 Sam. xvii. 23, Zechariah xi. 13, Psalms lxix. Like Achitophel, who gave up David, the ancestor of the Messiah, Judas was bound to hang himself. In the matter of the thirty pieces of silver paid to the traitor, the writer of the first Gospel plainly intimates the source of the story by quoting the very words of the Septuagint text of Zechariah xi. 12, but blunderingly attributes them to Jeremiah.† Here the exegetical method of the Gospel *agadist* is as evident as it is simple.

When, therefore, it is pointed out that there is no system of criticism sufficiently subtle to distinguish in the Gospel writings what was really said or done by Jesus from that which was only derived from preconceived Messianic ideas, we have nothing to offer in opposition. As of Pythagoras so of Jesus, what is most certain is that things did not take place as they are narrated in the legend. If some of the words which have been attributed to the one or to the other are authentic, as Strauss, in the case of Jesus, is inclined to admit, so much cannot be said for their acts.

The only incontestable passages in the life of Jesus would seem to be the journey to Jerusalem and the Passion. Renan has shown that his career was, to a great extent, anticipated in the legend, while Strauss has pointedly remarked that it is doubtful whether Jesus would have recognised himself in the Jesus Christ of the time of the destruction of Jerusalem.

Seeing, then, that the greatest authorities in Gospel criticism are agreed that little or nothing certain is or can be known of Jesus, why are we called upon to

play on the name Peter, the "rock" of the Church (Matt. xvi., 18), and the inference that was drawn from it.—"Chrestos: a Religious Epithet; its Import and Influence," by J. B. Mitchell, M.D.; London, 1880.]

* French ed. Neftzer and Dollfus, t. ii., p. 333 sq. † Matt. xxvii., 9.

regard as authentic the likeness which represents him as a "youthful Jew, at once meek and terrible, subtle and imperious, guileless and deep, like the graceful figures with soft, flowing ringlets to be seen in the pictures of Bida?"* We are required to admire the "smile," the "gay demeanor," the "poetic imagination," the "loving disposition," of this "Divine dreamer," and with assurance told that "mankind will never cease to entertain love for him." Of all this nobody really knows anything whatever—these are only guesses and fanciful predictions. Doubtless, during long ages yet to come, the imitation of Jesus, like the imitation of Buddha, will furnish a mystic aliment for the love and devotion which is felt by so many human souls. But what do devout Christians love in Jesus but their own ideal of what is loveable? That which they contemplate on the cross is an ideal provided by their own heart.

Each Church, each Christian age and generation, has had its own Jesus. The "meek" Jesus of Renan is, for certain, neither the Jesus of James nor of John, the bosom companions of the man Jesus as he really was. The grace and charm of the Galilean idyll are, unfortunately, terribly marred by the gloomy figures to which they introduce us. It is to be feared that the beautiful, the "divine," dream, as he would say, which the eminent scholar experienced in the very country of the Gospel, will have the fate of the "Joconda" of Da Vinci, and many of the religious pictures of Raphael and Michael Angelo. Such dreams are admirable, but they are bound to fade.

But conceding the rank of historical documents to the Gospels—that is, the first three Gospels, and particularly the more primary and authentic of them—namely, the Gospel according to Mark—the Jesus who rises up and comes out from those old Judaising writings is truly no idyllic personage, no meek dreamer, no mild and amiable moralist; on the contrary, he is very much more of a Jew fanatic,

* *Les Evangiles*, ed. prin. pp. 88. Bida was a painter hardly known out of France.

attacking without measure the society of his time, a narrow and obstinate visionary, a half-lucid thaumaturge, subject to fits of passion, which caused him to be looked upon as crazy by his own people. In the eyes of his contemporaries and fellow-countrymen he was all that, and he is the same in ours. Only, far from imputing it to him as a matter for incrimination, we perceive, in the mental derangement under which he labored, the determining condition of his pre-eminence, the intimate cause of his influence on the world.*

What gives countenance to the belief that Jesus was anything but a meek visionary is that without confidence in one's self and a certain amount of self-assertion, it is difficult, if not impossible, to have much influence over men, and particularly men of contracted minds such as were Peter and the sons of Zebedee.

It is somewhat *piquant* to find that Renan, as an instance of the curious turns that things sometimes take, will have contributed perhaps more than anyone to wipe out the "Divine dreamer" of his predilection, whom he had previously discovered in the fourth Gospel, and to put in his place the gloomy and dreadful Jesus of the second, by what he has said in his later volumes in confirmation of the claims of the latter to superiority as a historical document. In this instance the French writer has shown greater critical perspicuity than Strauss, who, following what is called the "hypothesis of Griesbach," and in company with Baur and his school, Hilgenfeld, Reim, and others, had considered the Gospel according to Matthew not only more ancient than Mark, but as, together with Luke, the source of the second Gospel! The priority of Mark to us appears evident, and "the Mark hypothesis" might now be assumed to have finally relegated to the background "the Griesbach hypothesis," if in these questions of literary history there ever was finality. In speaking of Mark we must be understood to mean the canonical Gospel according to Mark, and not the Book of Mark, the interpreter and companion of Peter

* Mark iii., 21, 31—35; Matt. (attenuated as usual) xii., 46—50.

mentioned in the celebrated fragment of Papias, the authenticity of which is said to have had in its favor the direct testimony of John the Presbyter.*

This Mark is said to have written from memory what Christ had said and done : τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἢ λεχθέντα ἢ πραχθέντα. Papias, moreover, knew that "Matthew had composed in Hebrew the sayings (τὰ λόγια) of the Lord." It is upon those two writings, the existence of which is attested by a bishop of Asia Minor towards the middle of the second century, that the entire superstructure of our Gospel literature has been raised.

That the collection of sayings of the Lord attributed to the Apostle Matthew may have been anterior to the narrative of Mark, which itself, indeed, also contained such sayings, is more than probable, and we have given what we conceive to be the reason. But for certain the canonical Gospels of Mark and Matthew, so far as the writings mentioned by Papias under those names are concerned, must be looked upon as nothing more than tertiary products. Indeed, they make no claim to be primary documents, the work of Mark and Matthew, but merely to be composed "according to Mark" and "according to Matthew," those venerated names being connected with them only in a vague and general manner.

According to Scholten the text of Mark's original narrative had already been combined, by an unknown redactor, with a collection of sayings (λόγια) of the Lord more or less similar to that of the canonical Matthew, at the time when our second Gospel was compiled at Rome by another unknown writer. Renan on the contrary, commits the mistake of presenting to us this Gospel as the direct work of Peter's companion. Mark. The vividness of recollection, the exactness of detail, the firmness of touch, which secure for this book an independent and exceptional position in Gospel literature, do not, however, require the adoption of that view, for those qualities are naturally accounted for by the character of the documents, proto-Mark in particular, which were in the hands of its compiler, a

* Euseb. H. E. III. 39.

Jew-Christian of Rome, and by the circumstance that Mark, from whom they originally emanated, although he "had neither heard nor followed the Lord," to use the words of Papias,* might possibly, when still a child, have been present at some episode of the Passion.

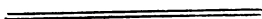
At all events he was personally acquainted with those who had played a prominent part with Jesus. His narrative, if the evidence of Papias be trustworthy, was set down from memory without orderly sequence, after the manner in which Peter was wont to recount the life of the Master. The Judaizing character of our second Gospel is what might be expected in a work compiled in the bosom of the Church in Rome, wherein the Jew-Christian party, which had inherited the spirit of the Jerusalem Church, was always very powerful.

Nevertheless too much must not be made of the Judaizing tendency of the Gospel according to Mark, for while critics like Hilgenfeld find in it chiefly the doctrine of Peter, Volkmar and his followers think that the teaching of Paul rather predominates. The indifference of the author in respect to Judaism, his hatred of the Pharisees, and opposition to the principles of the Jewish priesthood, have often been pointed out. It must be admitted that for a disciple of Peter these are somewhat strange sentiments. That the author was by birth a Jew, and that he wrote at Rome and for the Church in Rome, is all that can be affirmed with any degree of certainty.

But Renan, who, without sufficient proof arbitrarily decides in favor of the identity of the Mark mentioned by Papias with the compiler of the Gospel according to Mark, has allowed himself to be caught in the trap laid to that end by Church tradition, in taking the passage in the spurious, though canonical, Epistle of Peter (I. Peter v. 13), for evidence that Mark wrote his Gospel in Rome, where, following on Peter's steps he had, according to that tradition, gone, arriving soon after the apostle's martyrdom. Nobody, however, knows better than he that the so-called First Epistle of Peter, full

* Οὕτε γὰρ ἤκουσε τοῦ κυρίου οὔτε παρηκολούθησεν αὐτῷ.

of allusions to Paul's writings, as well as to the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Epistle of James, dates, in all probability, from about the year 130 A.D. at the earliest, thus placing two generations between the time of its composition and the latter years of the reign of Nero, when Peter is fabled to have been in Rome.



CHAPTER III.

IT is a very prevalent belief, and Renan has expressed his participation in it, that Peter went to Rome. But neither before nor after Paul's going there was Peter at Rome. Consequently he did not suffer martyrdom there.

The Ebionite fable and the Catholic legend of Peter have recently been exhaustively studied. Following in the steps of the great critical school of Tübingen, Christian Bauer, Zeller, Schweler, and R. A. Lipsius have applied to this problem in ecclesiastical history their precise method of criticism and the vast resources of their erudition. The latest work on the subject is that by E. Zeller in the *Deutsche Rundschau*, entitled "The Legend of Peter, Bishop of Rome," whereof a French translation has been published.*

With the legend of Peter, began the series of incredible falsifications and inventions of documents upon which rest the spiritual and temporal domination of the Papacy. That legend has been, in fact, the making of the Church of Rome. When the Roman bishops came to fancy that they were the successors of an apostle for whom Jesus appeared to have a marked preference, they were not long in making themselves believe that the pretended prerogatives of Peter had been transmitted to the Pontiff of Rome. It became their conviction that Jesus had confided to Peter the

* "La Légende de Saint-Pierre," traduit de l'allemand par Alfred Marchand; Paris, 1877. When reading this learned treatise it is well to have at hand the work of Lipsius, "Die Quellen der Römischen Petrusgeschichte kritisch untersucht," a work in every respect remarkable, which brings together all the facts and texts whereon is founded the reasoning that has scattered to the winds the fable of the primate rank of Peter as Bishop of Rome and martyr, and therewith the traditional pretensions of the Roman church.

duty of continuing his work, the consequence being that the Pope was the vicar of Christ, or, in other words, God's vicegerent on earth.

It was not till about the middle of the second century that the government of the church at Rome, theretofore conducted by boards or colleges of elders, which were commonly styled Presbyteries, assumed the monarchical form, and that a distinction was made between the bishop, or overseer, and the presbyter, or priest. "So far as the Church of Rome is concerned," writes Zeller, "it is certain that it had no bishop, in the sense afterwards given to that word, before the second century."*

Peter, therefore, could not have been Bishop of Rome. Is there room, nevertheless, for supposing that he might have been leader of the Christian communities in the Roman capital in somewhat the same way in which Paul, during his sojourn at Ephesus and Corinth, directed the churches that he had there founded? There is none whatever. In the authentic documents of the New Testament there is not the slightest allusion to any going of Peter to Rome or residence by him there. In the First Epistle of Peter, which, however, cannot be ranked as authentic, dating probably from 130 to 140 A.D., the author, whoever he may have been, sends to those whom he was addressing greetings on the part of the co-elect of Babylon and of Mark his son (I. Peter, v., 13). "Babylon" is the symbolical name under which the Roman capital is referred to in the Book of the Apocalypse and in the pseudo-Sybilline Oracles. But it must be admitted, by those who give credence to church traditions, that Peter could not have applied that expression to Rome. It did not come into use, probably was not invented, till after the night in August of the year 64, when, to

* [*Ἐπίσκοπος* (overseer) was the ordinary Greek name for those who performed the part of overlooking or inspecting. Like so many other things, its special Christian use came from the synagogue (*ἐκκλησία*, meeting-house), where the senior rabbi was the *episcopos*. In the Christian synagogue the elder brethren or presbyters took the place of the rabbin, the chief elder consequently becoming the *episcopos* or bishop.]

appease public rumor, many Christians were thrown to the beasts or burnt alive during the expiatory solemnities which were then celebrated by command of Nero,* and, according to the traditions of the Church, Peter, as well as Paul, was among the victims. All, then, that the passage in question proves is that about the year 130 A.D. it was believed in the Church that Peter had resided in Rome.

But Peter was not put to death in Rome, for the very good reason that he never at any time went there, neither at the same time as Paul, nor before nor after Paul.

Peter did not go there with Paul, for chapters xxvii. and xxviii. of the Acts of the Apostles—the authentic narrative of an eye-witness—make it quite clear that in quitting Cæsarea to be conveyed to Rome for trial, Paul was not accompanied by Peter. Moreover, the latter apostle is not once mentioned among the brethren and fellow laborers of Paul in the great city. The Epistles to the Philippians, to the Colossians, to the Ephesians, and to Philemon, are, it is true, far from being of incontestable or uncontested authenticity; but their author, whoever he was, would for certain have had occasion to name Peter as being among the Christians of mark in Rome, if that eminent apostle had been there.

It is equally clear that Peter was not in Rome before Paul. The apostle of the Gentiles says to the Romans, in the epistle addressed to them, that he had often

* [Considering how very doubtful is the authenticity of the passage in the Annals of Tacitus whence is derived the account of this transaction, the attempt here made to date therefrom the application to Rome of the symbolical name of Babylon would seem to be scarcely warranted. The designating of the Imperial city by a disguised appellation savors quite as much of Jewish as of Christian phraseology, and in all probability originated, before the reign of Nero, among the fanatical Jews, who were the real inventors of the apocalyptic style. With those, therefore, who regard the passage in question as untrustworthy, this argument can have no weight. For the ecclesiastical party, however, who rely much on the pretended testimony of Tacitus for proof of the severe trials through which the Christian religion, by divine aid, succeeded in passing, its cogency will perhaps be felt to be greater. But the case against Peter as Bishop of Rome is sufficiently strong without it.]

intended visiting Rome in order to be useful to them, as to other Gentiles (Romans i., 13). Paul even declares emphatically to the Christian community of Rome that he was "ready to preach the gospel also to them" (i., 15.) How could he have so written, if, at that time and previously, Peter had been resident in Rome presiding over the church there?*

The last hypothesis, namely, that which makes Peter go to Rome after Paul† has no other nor better foundation than the *Ebionite* legend of Simon Magus. As Peter was not at Rome during the captivity of Paul there, it has been imagined that the apostle of the Gentiles, after gaining his liberty, returned a second time to Rome, and there underwent a long imprisonment, ending in his execution along with Peter. With the exception of a doubtful allusion in the Muratori Canon, which dates from about the years 190 to 200 A.D., no mention of a second captivity of Paul is to be found in any writing earlier than the fourth century. The twenty-first chapter of the fourth Gospel contains, no doubt, a more distinct allusion to the martyrdom of Peter. But that chapter, which is not by the hand that wrote the body of the Gospel according to John, is an addition of unknown date, and the allusion in question which occurs therein does not, moreover, intimate that the martyrdom was to take place at Rome.

"The oldest form of the legend of Peter at Rome," writes Lipsius,‡ "is that which makes the apostle go there to encounter Simon Magus." On this subject the most fully matured opinion, whereof the author just named is one of the ablest exponents, is that "the

* [And especially seeing that further on in the same epistle he so distinctly expresses his objection to extending his apostolic labors to places where others had been working: "Yes, so have I striven to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation" (Rom. xv., 20).]

† [The going of Peter to Rome after Paul is absolutely inconsistent with the ecclesiastical tradition or legend which sends him there, because that tradition represents him to have been twenty-five years Bishop of Rome and yet to have been put to death in the reign of Nero.]

‡ "Die Quellen der Römischen Petrussage," p. 9.

legend of Simon Magus, in its primitive form, owes its origin entirely to the hatred of the Jew-Christians for the apostle of the Gentiles. The more ancient the legend is in form the more distinct are the evidences that, from beginning to end, it is nothing but a parody on the life and doctrine of Paul.* For a long period the anti-Pauline judaising section of the church took pleasure in dwelling on the triumph of Peter, who in the course of his opposition to the false apostle had followed him to Rome. "It is clear," to continue the quotation, "that it was the arrival of the apostle of the Gentiles in that city, and nothing else, that suggested the appearance of Peter in Rome, against all authentic evidence. The conflict of the two parties was represented by a personal struggle between Simon Peter and Simon Magus put in the place of Paul." Thus it

* [Every fable has something real at the bottom of it. The fabulous superstructure may have nothing whatever in common with any antecedent structure, but when circumstances permit of its being examined closely, there will always be found in its composition old materials. Literary invention, in this respect, resembles all other inventions, and the most fantastic tales are no more real creations than newly-coined words, or even than mechanical inventions, which are but new modifications of words or of contrivances already in use. If it were admitted that the Ebionite story of Simon Magus, which comes to us in the Christian literature of the latter part of the second century and posterior ages, was a fable invented to discredit Paul and his school, it would be necessary, in order satisfactorily to explain its inception, to discover at least some of the old materials that were used in its composition. There is no need for those materials to be truly relevant, it is enough that they are suggestive. We have only to recognise the story of Simon Magus, as it is given in Acts viii., 9—24, to be a matter-of-fact but distorted relation, or at least to admit that it had been published or known anteriorly to the rise of the Ebionite fable, in order to have the material embryo in which the latter developed itself. According to this view the magician's name, Simon—the other Simon—and the circumstance that his adherents were the despised and hated Samaritans, would serve as a sufficiently suggestive basis for the form of the legend. It is true that there is nothing in the story in the Acts to suggest the appearance of Simon Magus at Rome; but if the ridiculous error, reported by the Jew-Christian writer Justin (*Apol. I.*, 26, 56), whereby a dedicatory inscription to Semo Sancus (*Semoni Sancto*), the Sabine god of good faith or faithful testimony existing in Rome, had been interpreted to refer to Simon Sanctus (*Simoni Sancto*)—i.e., Simon Peter—were admitted to have prevailed in the Christian community of Rome before the date of Justin's writings—namely, about 140 A.D.—we should

was to combat and unmask the false apostle, the impious and artful seducer of souls, already exposed in Palestine, and Syria, that Peter, following Paul like his shadow, went to Rome.

Foremost among the important documents of the Judaizing class which relate to this legend, stand the "Homilies" and the "Recognitions" of Clement, the former composed probably about the year 180 A.D., the latter somewhat later. Their author was evidently an Ebionite or Jew-Christian—a determined opponent of the doctrines of Paul. Peter is therein represented as the apostle of the Gentiles, and Jew-Christianity as the true faith of the Roman Church. Paul is "the enemy," the faithless and detested renegade; his entire life, conversion and journeyings; all his labors are made light of, parodied, caricatured.*

have precisely the required suggestion on that head. As to what may have suggested the idea of Simon Magus's attempted flight in the air, it is not necessary to go far in search of it, for Suetonius relates an accident precisely similar to that fabled to have befallen the Samaritan magician, which happened at Rome in the time of Nero to an individual who, in repeating the experiment of Icarus in the amphitheatre, fell to the ground near the Emperor's box and bespattered it with his blood (Suet. Nero, XII.) These in all probability were the materials that were seized upon by the Petrine Christians wherewith to shape their anti-Pauline legend; but in all else—namely, the working up of the fable—the guide which they followed was, of course, the conception of mocking and parodying Paul. There is, moreover, nothing more intrinsically improbable in the account of Simon Magus contained in the Acts than there is in any other of the Gospel relations; all are distorted and more or less inaccurate accounts, having some substratum of reality.]

* [It is by no means improbable that the unprepossessing, perhaps grotesque, personal appearance of Paul had much to do in evoking the ridicule with which he was pursued by a certain party. The earnestness and ardor of the apostle were so great as to secure for him a degree of attention and respect that has fallen to the lot of but few; nevertheless, those who from temperament or reasons of their own were unaffected by his polemic were probably prompted by his physical peculiarities to indulge their dislike by mockery and caricature. Was it not natural that those who had a distaste for Paul's doctrines, should have been tempted to lampoon their author, seeing that according to the Acts of Thecla, a genuine Christian writing of the second century, he was "low of stature, with a mean head, bandy legs, a big nose, and heavy meeting eyebrows;" and of whom Nicephorus, the great Byzantine compiler of the early church traditions, has left the following description: "Small, hunch-backed, sallow, piercing look, heavy brows

But before the end, and perhaps even from the setting in of the latter half of the second century, notwithstanding that the Judaising party continued to be very powerful in the Roman Church, a change took place in the way of presenting the legend; from that period it assumed a form less scandalising for the Christian conscience. In the Catholic class of documents relating thereto, Paul is represented as the companion and friend of Peter, and made to take a part in the defeat of Simon Magus.

In the books entitled the "History of Peter and Paul" and the "Preaching of Peter and Paul," the meeting of the two apostles at Rome, the miracles which they there performed, the conversions which they made, and their martyrdom are set forth. "The former of these pieces," writes Zeller, "has perhaps reached us uncurtailed, but with additions of a later age, in the form of the 'Acts of Peter and Paul,' and documents which, in the shape we now have it, must be attributed, at the earliest, to the fifth century. It is extremely probable that primitively the story ran that Paul, on reaching Rome, had found Peter already there engaged in opposing Simon Magus; that both apostles had taken part against Simon in a religious disputation before the Emperor Nero; that Simon, having offered to prove the divine character of his

almost hiding his eyes, and an immense hooked nose!" This picture is partially confirmed by Paul himself who in the second Epistle to the Corinthians (x. 10.) intimates that his opponents derided him on account of the insignificance of his person. Add to this that, in all probability Paul was rheumatic, the "thorn (skewer) in the flesh." (*σκόλοψ τῇ σαρκί*) with which by his own account (2 Cor. xii. 7.) he was afflicted, and whereof divines and commentators have till now failed to discover a satisfactory interpretation, according to a very happy conjecture of Renan, being that martyrising and sometimes deforming ailment rheumatism, which could hardly be better described in familiar language than by the expression used by Paul. Indeed, it is by no means unlikely that *σκόλοψ τῇ σαρκί* was a common, if not the usual, vulgar Greek name for rheumatism; for it is extremely improbable that the medical term *ρευματισμός*, due as it is to a peculiar humoral theory, was in common use for that prevalent and familiar complaint. It is just such a phrase as is met with in popular language, calling to mind a north-country English expression of a similar kind—"stitch in the side,"—for the acute thoracic pain which is liable to come on after sudden and violent exertion in running.]

mission by rising into the air and sustaining himself there, had proceeded to give effect to his boast, but before he could rise to any considerable height had, through the efficacy of Peter's prayers, been suddenly brought down and made to fall heavily on the ground ; that irritated by the issue of the conflict, Nero had condemned to death the two apostles, causing Paul to be beheaded on the Ostia road, whilst Peter, escaping from Rome, had been turned back by an apparition of Christ, and been subsequently crucified with his head downwards."*

Thus, even in the legend so transformed and now become Catholic, the first place, the leading part, is allotted to Peter among the Gentiles, whose conversion, beyond doubt, was the work of Paul. If the story in this shape has lost its aggressiveness against Paul, it still retains its original fabulous structure, and the signs and wonders that were wrought at the hands of the apostles.

It is clear that the episcopate and martyrdom of Peter at Rome are legendary. The primacy of that apostle is a fable, and the apostolic succession is equally unfounded. The Popes are no successors of Peter. Scientific investigation has demonstrated that the whole is an invention, with no better foundation than the imaginary struggle of Simon Peter with Simon Magus. What is not imaginary, however, is the haughty antagonism and stifled ill-will on the part of Peter, to which were due the estrangement and opposition of the two chief apostles who were the founders of Christianity.

It was in the bosom of the Church of Rome, then closely affiliated with the Church of Jerusalem, that took its rise the Ebionite Fable, which, by making a renegade of Paul, represented him as a false prophet—a magician whom Peter followed step by step throughout the world, confounding him publicly wherever he went. Simon Magus—that is, Paul—had gone to Rome ; Simon Peter must needs follow him. Later on, the circumstances of the Church having altered,

* Zeller's "La Légende de St. Pierre," pp. 18, 19.

the apostle of the Jews was made to be reconciled with the apostle of the Gentiles, and both were made to suffer a common martyrdom. The transformed legend is not one whit less imaginary than the earlier Ebionite fable.

CHAPTER IV.

IF, as there is room for expecting, the Gospel of Mark (the proto-Mark relatively to the second gospel) whereof Papias speaks, shall come to be reconstituted, by separating the primary gospel matter contained in the canonical Mark from the secondary and tertiary materials which overlies and conceal it,* the Jesus who would thereby be brought to light will appear more and more of a thaumaturge. The miraculous cures which Mark describes the Master to have performed are shrouded in mystery. Jesus enjoins on those who were the objects of his favors not to speak openly of them. Fear is the sentiment which he chiefly inspires in those coming into contact with him; the people, terrified by the prodigies which he does, come beseeching him to leave their neighborhood. Far from restoring sight to the blind and casting out devils with the unfailing power which the divine Master of all things must be presumed to possess, he has to struggle hard to effect his purpose, and return several times to the charge ere he succeeds.

Look at the case of the demoniac of Gadara (Mark v. 1—20), and that of the epileptic lad (ix. 14—29)—a masterpiece of accurate observation which the Hippocratic *Περὶ τῆς νόσου* would not disown—above all at that of the blind man of Bethsaida (viii., 22—26).† In the latter case, Jesus leads the patient outside of the

* [The composite character of the Second Gospel is rendered very evident by the presence in it, as well as in the later Gospel according to Matthew, of the story of the mocking of Jesus, which, as has been shown above, was taken and adapted from Philo.]

† [When Jesus raises the daughter of Jairus, he puts away all her friends from witnessing the re-animating process. Even at the transcendently important Transfiguration scene only his three favorite apostles are permitted to be present.]

town, spits upon his eyes, puts his hands upon them and asks him if he saw aught; getting the reply, "I see men like trees walking." Jesus a second time lays his hands upon his eyes, whereupon the blind man's sight was restored and he saw things distinctly. It will thus be seen that the miraculous cures performed by Jesus were done by means of formulas which have much in common with those that were used by vulgar magicians and adepts in the Cabbala.

Not much of the beautiful Galilean idyll in this scene! and very little trace, in this true brother of James, of the attractive smiles, the winning ways and the charming grace of the guileless peasant to whom we were introduced in a certain popular book.* "It cannot be denied," now confesses, however, the author of *Les Origines du Christianisme*, "that Jesus is portrayed in this gospel (Mark) not as a meek moralist worthy of our affections, but as a dreadful magician." This would be of little consequence if the second canonical gospel possessed as little claim to authenticity as the fourth; but it must be admitted, on the contrary, that the former, so far as the acts of Jesus are concerned, is the sole authentic (yet only relatively authentic) record that we possess.

From a psychological point of view, the Gospel according to Mark is also very superior to the other two synoptics. When the state of public feeling in Judea, from the Asmonean period to the destruction of Jerusalem, is brought to mind, it is no longer possible to entertain the idea that if Jesus had not been a worker of miracles he would have produced any impression on the people. If he had done no more than preach an elevated morality, like that contained in the sermon on the mount, he might, it is true, have been remembered as a teacher of pure and lofty sentiment, such as was Hillel,† but he would never have given rise to a church.

* Renan's "Vie de Jesus," published in 1863.

† [Hillel, who flourished about the period of our era, and was the immediate predecessor of Gamaliel, at whose feet sat Paul, was not only a lofty moralist, but a rabbi whose teaching, like that of his junior, Philo Judæus, was essentially evangelical. The following are some of

Jesus was a thaumaturge, or he was nothing. The Jews of that time would have miracles, just as the Catholics of the present require them. A day hardly passed without its miracle. In the Talmud certain prayers are prescribed for the case of "private miracles" happening to individuals. Moreover Jesus, according to the Gospels, was not by any means singular in possessing the power to perform prodigies; his own people and his disciples also enjoyed it. It was by such signs and wonders that the public recognised the prophets, and were converted. Renan, who would now, if he could, drop out of sight Mark's "strict Jew," is obliged to avow that miraculous cures and magical exorcisms, performed by invoking the name of Jesus, were the principal means of conversion employed by the apostles.* He cites a certain Jew-Christian of Galilee, Jacob of Caphar-Schekania, who, after the fashion of James, the brother of the Lord, practised this kind of spiritist therapeutics, and pretended to cure the bites of serpents by the name of Jesus.† Even so late as the third century, it would appear, there were Jew medicine-men who continued to treat illnesses by invoking Jesus' name.‡

the recorded maxims of Hillel :—"Be a promoter of peace, a friend of all men, and draw them near unto the law." "Do not judge thy neighbour until thou hast stood in his place." "Whosoever increases not in knowledge decreases." "Do not unto another what thou wouldst not have another do unto thee; this is the whole law, the rest is but commentary."]

* 1st Cor., i., 22; ii., 4, 5; 2nd Cor., xii., 12; 1st Thess., i., 5; 2nd Thess., ii., 9; Gal. iii., 5; Rom. xv., 18, 19. If contact with the clothing of Jesus while he was going about was sufficient to cure disease, the mere shadow of Peter, after the Master's decease, effected the same prodigy. The populace in Jerusalem "brought forth the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall upon them," and make them whole (Acts v., 12—16). [As to the miraculous virtue of Paul, the story went, it seems, that handkerchiefs which had been used by him, when conveyed to a distance, preserved their power not only of curing diseases, but of casting out evil spirits (Acts xix., 12).]

† [Justin, the Patristic apologist (140 A.D.), was familiar with the casting out of devils by the name of Jesus: *κατὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ τῶν δαιμονίων ἐξαρριζόμενον νικάται*.—Dial. c. Tryph., 85.]

‡ [The name of Jesus might very well have been used as a charm irrespectively of Jesus of Nazareth. In its Hebrew form of Jeschu or

Belief in miracles and the supernatural, but especially in miraculous cures, was everywhere prevalent at that time. The doctrine so clearly set forth by the author of the treatise, "On Air, Water, and Localities, and the Illness called Sacred"—the Hippocratic principle that all diseases are natural, had been lost in the shipwreck which befel Hellenic science. In the age of Jesus how few, even among the best informed, were capable of recognising the truth of that profound dictum of Aristotle, "Nothing whatever happens contrary to nature."* Nevertheless it is not possible to admit, as has been asserted, that the Romans, even to a greater extent than the Jews, shared in those superstitions.†

Joshua, it signifies God the Savior, the Greek equivalent being Jason or Jasus (several instances occur in the writings of Josephus), which name having in the latter tongue the meaning of healing, was that whereby Esculapius, the god of healing, was usually invoked. There is a great deal more significance in these allusions to exercising in the name of Jesus, or by the utterance of the word "Jesus," than appears on the surface. Name and word analogies have played a vastly more important part in primitive Christianity, and, indeed, in the primary stages of most religions, than is generally suspected.]

* *Ὅτι δὲν γίνεσθαι κατὰ φύσιν, in Περὶ Ζώων Ἑφεστών, IV., 4.*

† [There were Romans and Romans in the matter of superstition as in everything else.

Dehinc Gnatia, nymphis

Iratissimæ, detit risusque jocosque :

Dum flamma sine, thura liquescere, limine sacro

Persuadere cupit ; credat Judæus Apella,

Non ego ; namque deos didici securum agere ævum :

Nec, si quid miri faciat natura, deos id

Tristes exalto coeli demittere tecto. — (Hor. Sat., i., 5.)

The populace of Rome and Italy generally, as well as of the provinces, were of course saturated with superstition, as the herd of mankind everywhere are when left to themselves. The above verses which have so deeply branded the Jews, in the person of Apella, as the most superstitious of men in the Augustan age, while recording the contempt of the poet for priestly prodigies and the notion that the gods should interrupt their dignified repose in heaven by lending a hand to add such to the true wonders of nature, witness to the failings of the ancient Italian public in that respect. The society which was capable of relishing Horace was evidently cultured and incredulous. But there was no Jewish society possessed of culture. The entire literature of the Jews—history and all—was of the "sacred," or quasi-sacred kind, that is to say the literature of ecclesiastics and Biblicists, with the single exception, perhaps, of the writings of Josephus. As likewise did the Christian and Mahomedan fanatics who sprang from them and who have perpetuated and so greatly extended their per-

It is somewhat surprising to find Renan, in company with the theologians and divines, citing, in support of that assumption, the miraculous cures performed by the Roman Emperor Vespasian, although perhaps, in truth, hardly otherwise than apologetically. This is even the only excuse that an earnest writer could have for keeping the parallel in view, for in mentioning somewhere that worthy ruler he speaks of his "light-hearted scepticism." Very far indeed from having been a performer of miracles, like Jesus and other leading sectarians of that period, Vespasian "repulsed, at first

icious and debasing theocratic nonsense, the Jews despised "profane" literature, and refused to make themselves acquainted with the Greek authors. ("For the Jews require a sign, but the Greeks seek after wisdom."—1 Cor., i., 22.) When they converted the Roman world to their Jehovah and their Bible, they introduced those anti-human sentiments which are, in principle, as inimical to art, science, and civil liberty as to literature. It is to the infusion into Europe, from the Jews, of this brutal intolerance for every kind of human enlightenment that we owe the moral and intellectual darkness of the Middle Ages, from which Europe is only beginning to emerge. And we shall never be free from the risk of a relapse until those barren and noxious principles are utterly discarded from every stage and grade of instruction, and the fertile and vivifying principles of the Hellenic age are adopted in all departments of education and learning. It was not without reason that classical studies were called "the humanities."

The very stolidity of Jewish superstition, by giving it a certain air of seriousness, would seem to have had the effect of imposing on the Gentiles. We find Pliny gravely recording that "there was in Judea a stream, which every Sabbath day ceased to flow, leaving its bed dry" (N. H. XIII., 9, 5); and Pausanias, at an interval of 100 years, circumstantially describing the wonderful tomb of Helena at Jerusalem, the door of which, on a stated day and hour once a year opened in a mysterious manner and soon afterwards closed, but which at all other times remained shut and could not be opened without violence (VIII., 16). So persistent among the ignorant are prodigies and fables that vestiges of those two marvels have survived to the present day. The intermittent Fountain of Siloam at Jerusalem, still believed to be supernatural, probably represents the sabbatic stream of Pliny; while it can hardly be doubtful that the annual opening and immediate shutting of the door in the Holy Sepulchre, whence the "holy fire" is emitted at Easter, represents the phenomenon described by Pausanias. Additional probability is given to the latter suggestion by the circumstance that each of those tombs has connected with its history an Helena—one the mother of King Izates, the other the mother of the Emperor Constantine. When the European traveller now sees at Jerusalem the poor abject Jew bowing his empty head before the foundation stones of his long-ruined temple, he can well realise the

with ridicule,"* the two superstitious Egyptians of Alexandria, and it was only after taking the opinion of medical men as to the possible curability of the diseases he was asked to cure, that he allowed himself to give way, on grounds of policy, to the solicitations of the two Serapian worshippers.†

The essential difference between Vespasian and Jesus, as regards miracle working,‡ is that the former was a thaumaturge in spite of himself, whereas the latter must have believed that he really possessed miraculous powers, if he were anything more than a mere vulgar charlatan.§

The authenticity of the Greek Gospel according to Matthew is, at the present day, well established. Composed by a Jew-Christian for the Judaizing brethren of Syria whose vernacular was Greek, this book is a masterpiece of *agadic* writing. Almost all the pretended

intensity which are capable of acquiring in the uncultured human mind superstitious faith and fanatical arrogance hereditarily rooted in a caste by exclusive sexual alliances.]

* Suet.: Vespas. 7; Tacit.: Hist. iv. 81.—*Vespasianus primo irridere, adspernari.*

† [It might almost be suspected that there was some connexion between the statements of the Roman writers and the following allusion by Josephus to the curing of demoniacs before Vespasian: "I have seen a certain man of my own country, whose name was Eleazar, releasing people that were demoniacal in the presence of Vespasian and his sons, and his captains, and the whole multitude of his soldiers. And the manner of cure was this: he put a ring bearing a Solomon's charm to the nostrils of the demoniac and drew forth out of the nose the demon, commanding him, on leaving, to overturn a cup of water which had been placed on purpose a little way off, and thereby let the spectators know that he had taken his departure." (Jos. Ant. viii. 2, 2.) *Et graviter credidit Judæus Josephus !*]

‡ [There is moreover, nothing whatever in common between the miraculous performances of prophets and acts like that to which Vespasian lent himself, so far as the motive for them is concerned. The miracles of the prophet are displayed as credentials in support of his claims to divine authority; the expectation of miraculous cures at the hands of monarchs is but a survival of the vulgar sentiment of the "divinity that doth hedge in kings," which was even continued as an actuality in modern times in the cure by the royal touch of "the king's evil."]

§ [Jesus, it would appear, not only believed in his power to cure disease supernaturally, but had a theory on the subject. And Jesus said: "Somebody hath touched me, for I perceive that virtue hath gone out of me." (Luke viii., 46.)]

Messianic prophecies of the Hebrew Bible are therein represented as having been accomplished in the acts and works of Jesus. It was long a generally received opinion that the first Gospel had been used in the composition of the second, which, according to that view, was little else than an abridgment thereof; but so little is this the case that the study of Matthew in connexion with Mark brings the conviction that the former was preceded by our present Mark, or a proto-Mark, whence were derived the plan and order of its narrative and certain characteristic forms of expression, all of which are common to both.

The Gospel according to Matthew is considered by Renan, and he is probably right, to have been composed on or soon after the importation into Palestine of the second Gospel from Rome, where the latter was written. The gaps which were perceived in Mark were filled up by inserting in its text the discourses (*λόγια*) of the Lord contained in a collection which, according to the testimony of Papias and probably of others, was current under the name of Matthew, modifications and fabulous additions derived from other sources being introduced into the narrative.*

The gloomy Jewish *nabi*, the ardent revolutionary of the second Gospel, becomes in the first, the good shepherd, the mild master, beaming with serenity and benignity—the Christ of the Beatitudes, in short. The fanatical self-glorification of the *ebionim*, “Blessed are the poor,” is softened down to eulogy of piety and resignation: “Blessed are the poor in spirit” (Matt. v., 3). “Those who are hungry,” become “those who hunger and thirst after righteousness.” It is not only the Christian conscience which has become spiritual; the Church has by this time been founded and upon the primacy of Peter (Matt. xvi., 18; xviii., 17). The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are invoked in the baptismal formula (Matt. xxviii., 19). “The germ of the dogma of the Trinity is there quietly deposited

* For instance, the drink, by custom supplied to criminals when on the point of being executed, which in Mark is correctly described as wine (xv., 23), in Matthew is altered to vinegar (xxvii., 34).

in a corner of the sacred page, and will by-and-bye spring up and bear fruit," as Renan has well said.

Matthew had been dead many years when our first Gospel was composed at a period subsequent to the destruction of Jerusalem (70 A.D.); but the Jew-Christians of Syria, desiring to oppose to the name of Mark a name of still higher authority, ascribed their book to the inspiration of that apostle who had been an actor in the Gospel drama and an eye-witness of what was related. Never, however, had narrative fewer claims to be written by a witness. The marvellous is displayed as in a fairy tale. Peter walks with Jesus on the Sea of Galilee (Matt. xiv., 28); he finds coin in the mouth of a fish (xvii., 27); the wife of Pilate sees Jesus in a dream (xxvii., 19); when Jesus gives up the ghost the graves open, the saints come to life, and are seen walking in the streets of Jerusalem (xxvii., 51, sq.) The first canonical Gospel stands alone in narrating those prodigies.

With the Gospel according to Luke the task of the critic becomes easier. The author was evidently not an Israelite, and he did not write for Jew-Christians. He had before him the primitive text of Mark and the original collection of discourses bearing the name of Matthew, but he did not know our Gospel according to Matthew. Where he agrees with the latter it is in passages which correspond with Mark. He has appropriated almost the whole of the second Gospel.* The discourses of Jesus are fragmentary as in Mark; those that are not taken from Mark do not follow in the same order as in Matthew. Lastly, the legends of the infancy and the genealogies (unknown to Mark), as given in Luke and Matthew, have nothing in common. One third of the text of Luke is derived from unknown Gospels† and oral traditions.‡

* Except the part Mark vi., 45, to viii., 26, and the account of the Passion.

† They were numerous: πολλοί, i., 1, 2.

‡ [Or, perhaps, from independent scrolls or leaflets.

The distinctive character of the individual Gospels and the order, so far as regards simplicity of redaction, in which they come, are well

Although the author has not been able, any more than the redactor of the first Gospel, to avoid the contradictions and repetitions that resulted from want of agreement among the documents made use of, he may almost be classed as a practised writer. He was not ignorant of composition, nor devoid of literary taste and feeling. If the second Gospel has a flavor of the lives of the Saints, the third, in certain respects, may be ranked as a work of reflexion. The writer, more or less unconsciously, makes use of legends, already become venerable, to clothe and drape certain speculative doctrines, in conformity with contemporary party interests in the Church.

Luke writes for a public which has become, if it was not always, a stranger to the untoward conflict between Peter and Paul, to the scarcely dissimulated hatred of the Syrian *ebionim* for the Hellenist Christians, and to the serious disputes which had divided the Church in its early days. Though a disciple of Paul, he speaks respectfully of Peter, and even of James himself. Like an Ebionite he praises poverty, but in his religious views in general there is nothing strained nor austere. The Gospel of Luke is the gospel of forgiveness—Samaritans, publicans, virtuous Pagans, harlots, robbers—all are saved by faith. Of the law not a word; instead, almsgiving, devotion, and the adoration of Jesus. Above all, Luke is no revolutionary.

He writes in the spirit of a Roman, speaking respectfully of centurions and other functionaries.

exhibited in the form severally given by them to the superscription which was placed on the cross, namely:—

Mark.—The King of the Jews.

Luke.—*This is* the King of the Jews.

Matthew.—*This is Jesus*, the King of the Jews.

John.—*Jesus of Nazareth*, the King of the Jews.

In Mark we have probably, in its real form, this important official document, which must be presumed to have contained the registered charge against Jesus; Luke gives a more literary turn to the simple title by the addition of the superfluous words "this is"; in the spirit of a compiler the Jew author of Matthew inserts the name "Jesus"; the writer of the fourth Gospel, with the licence of sectarian enthusiasm and the object of producing a gospel calculated to distance, in a particular sense, and supersede all others, perfects, as he thinks,

The flagellation inflicted on Jesus is kept out of sight. With great tact Luke manages to avoid saying that it was at the hands of the Roman authorities that Jesus was insulted and crucified (xxiv., 20). He suppresses the story of the putting to death of John Baptist by Herod Antipas (ix., 7—9 ; cf. Mark vi., 14 sq., etc.) The name Luke (Lucanus) is Roman, and according to Renan, chapters xxv. and xxvi. of Acts would warrant the belief that, like Josephus, he had had relations with Agrippa, Berenice, and the Jewish coterie of Titus. But the connexion of Luke and his Gospel with the Jewish and Christian Society of Rome in the Flavian age, is purely conjectural.

We must now turn our attention to the imperial family of the Flavii, wherein it has often been unwarrantably assumed that there were Christians ; but before so doing it will be advisable to make a few remarks on the fourth canonical Gospel, the Gospel according to John, and the latest views of its value as an authority.

the record by introducing "of Nazareth." Nothing could better mark, moreover, not only the total absence of exactness in the Gospel writings, but the fact that their authors made no pretension to the accuracy which is expected in historical compositions ; that, in truth, they never suspected they were writing history and had no conception of what it meant—than this treatment of the sole official document alluded to in any of the Gospels. Nevertheless, the superscription on the cross, which constituted the first publication to the world of Jesus as the Christ, referred to the culminating point in his career, the portentous event whereby the human Messiah was eclipsed, and which formed the starting point of the spiritual Christ. It is a somewhat curious reflexion that the name Christ in connexion with Jesus was for the first time made public by Pontius Pilate.]

CHAPTER V.

ALMOST from the rise of the exegetical study of the New Testament, the Gospel according to John was, in Germany and Holland, set aside as being destitute of historical character. Renan, on the contrary, while rejecting as unauthentic the discourses contained in the Fourth Gospel, has, throughout the earlier volumes of his great work, treated the narrative part with marked favor. At the present time, however, to judge from his latest publication, "Les Evangiles," he has been constrained to admit that "probably no portion of the Gospel which bears the name of John was written either by that apostle or by any one of his disciples during his lifetime." He nevertheless persists in the belief that it reproduces, if only as an echo, the story of the life of the Master in the way the old apostle delighted to tell it. In recounting it he not unnaturally made himself play a prominent part, as is seen to be the case in the Johannine Gospel. But although his way of telling the story was very different from that of Peter and the Jew-Christians of Batanea, John knew nothing about the transcendental speculations which were so rife at Ephesus respecting the identity of Jesus and the Word, the "Logos." His account of Jesus (to continue Renan's latest statement of the case) was gathered up by some of his disciples, and published under his name with the speculations in questions incorporated into it.

But the tradition of the residence of John at Ephesus is a fable which ought to have the same fate as the book which gave it birth. We can detect and track its springing into being and growth in the age of Polycarp and Irenæus, when the apostolic authenticity of the Gospel elaborated in Ephesus was recognised throughout the churches. The starting-point is a vague mention of some apostle in the great Ionian city who had

long survived all his contemporaries ; but so far nothing more definite. Neither Justin, in his disputation (dialogue) with the Jew Tryphon at Ephesus,* nor the Epistle styled of Polycarp, nor Papias, nor any one of the leaders of the Asian Church, has breathed a syllable about the presence of John at Ephesus. Papias, the ἀρχαῖος ἀνὴρ, so diligent in gathering from the elders the apostolic traditions, particularly those of the Church of Ephesus, had heard of no Apostle John in Asia Minor.

What is more, Georgios Hamartalos, in the ninth century, found it stated in the book written by the venerable Bishop of Hierapolis, which has since been lost, that John the son of Zebedee had been killed by the Jews, thereby meaning that he had lost his life in Palestine, and consequently not in Ephesus : Παπίας ἐν τῷ δευτέρῳ λόγῳ τῶν κυριακῶν λογίων φάσκει ὅτι ὑπὸ Ἰουδαίων ἀνῆρέθη.

It is fully a century after the date of the pretended sojourn of John at Ephesus that the tradition to that effect is first heard of. For the same reason, and no other, that Peter was made to go to Rome, namely, to follow Paul, John was fabled to have gone to Ephesus. But John had been made also to go to Rome during the reign of Nero, where, however, more fortunate than Paul, he escaped death during the pretended persecution of the Christians, and Renan, in his book "L'Antéchrist," expresses his belief that such was the case.

In keeping with another tradition, according to which John had been plunged into boiling oil near the spot where the Latin gate of the city afterwards stood, the apostle was represented to have been impregnated with some inflammable matter in order to be set on fire, like other Christians, and converted into a living torch. Owing, however, to an oversight, the torchlighter employed in the midnight gala had forgotten to set fire to John, who was thus saved ! This comical tale, anyhow, would have amused Nero, but Nero had not the advantage of ever hearing of either John or Jesus.

* Euseb. H. E., iv., 18.

The condemnation of Christians to cruel deaths, such as crucifixion, being worried and devoured by wild beasts in the circus, or, after being smeared with grease and pitch, set up for the illumination of the emperor's own gardens, which took place at Rome, by command of Nero, was a measure that had no other object than to appease the public rumor, whereby they had been accused of being the authors of the great fire which destroyed a large portion of the city. And the accusation was not entirely devoid of the appearance of being true. In the eyes of the Romans both Christians and Jews were "incendiaries by desire" at least, although, in fact, there was no evidence that they, any more than other inhabitants of Rome, had wilfully raised the fire. The tortures to which the Christians were subjected were those usually inflicted, in similar cases, on persons of their condition. Almost all the Christians laid hold of were *humiliores*, or individuals without status. For such, when condemned, the Roman laws and usages reserved cruel and degrading deaths. Beheading was the punishment allotted to men of status—the *honestiores*. Having been accused of setting fire to Rome, the Christians, as a matter of course, would be burned alive; the mode of execution was called the *tunica molesta*.

Suetonius and Tacitus, truthful and high principled writers, have not a word of blame for the torturing of the Christians on this occasion. On the contrary, they rank that act among the laudable performances of Nero. Suetonius merely states that the Christians, "a kind of people infected with new and dangerous superstitions," were given over to torture.* Tacitus reports that Nero condemned to the most cruel deaths "a class of men detested on account of their abominations, and that the vulgar called them Christians. This name," he continues, "came to them from Christ, who under Tiberius was executed by the procurator Pontius Pilate. Repressed for a time, their execrable superstition broke out afresh, not only in Judea, where the plague had its source, but in Rome itself, where all the infamies and

* Suet. Nero, 16.

abominations known in any part of the world are found and have partisans. Those who openly professed their adherence to the sect were first arrested and, on their revelations, a great multitude of others who were found guilty not so much of incendiarism as of malicious hatred of mankind."*

Odium humani generis: These stern words of Tacitus well express the opinion commonly entertained of the Jews and Christians by the society of Rome. What other idea of such people could in truth be formed by any ordinarily well-informed Roman, to say nothing of thinkers like Seneca, ripe scholars like Petronius, and *savants* like Pliny the elder? How could a cultured mind, capable of relishing Cicero and Horace, see anything but fanatics of the most dangerous sort in those gloomy and reserved creatures, destitute of politeness and every notion of elegance, speaking in wretched Greek, throwing by stealth malicious looks on all around them—games, theatres, temple-solemnities and military displays; holding secret conventicles wherein they anathematised the society in which they were no better than useless parasites, and were never tired repeating that Satan was the prince of this world and that Jesus was on the point of coming back in glory to rule during a thousand years, in Jerusalem, over the ruins of the Roman empire! Although it was no light matter in their eyes, the citizens of Rome, do what they would, must have sometimes found it hard to refrain from laughing at such grotesque fancies. While the magistrates considered those fanatical sectarians as dangerous for the State, and in consequence kept a tight rein upon them, their fellow-citizens, as may be gathered from the *graffiti* discovered at Rome and Puzzuoli, gave vent to their feelings in regard to them in caricatures representing Jesus in the form of a divinity with the head of a donkey.†

* Tacit. Ann., xv., 44.

† [Unless, indeed, the so-called ass-headed crucifix here referred to, as Mr. C. W. King considers himself to have proved from comparison with other similar devices, be rather the scrawl of a Gnostic who thereby intended to represent a combination of the attributes of Christ and Anubis, the head being really that of a jackal, not of an ass.]

In the banishment of the Apostle John to Patmos we have another fable, its origin being an erroneous interpretation of a passage in the Apocalypse (I. 9). Eusebius, who recognised in John the author of that book without seriously believing it, writing in the fourth century, mentions, on the authority of Irenæus and Clement, of Alexandria, the exile of John to Patmos; only he places it towards the end of the reign of Domitian. But of all the New Testament books the only one whose date can be determined with certainty is the Apocalypse—namely in the reign of Galba, two years before the capture and destruction of Jerusalem, which events took place in 70 A.D., twenty-eight years previous to the death of Domitian!

The legend of the residence of John at Ephesus is a sort of pendant to that of the residence and martyrdom of Peter at Rome. Irenæus and the somewhat obscure Father, Polycrates, as appears by the report of Eusebius, bore witness that Polycarp had invoked the authority of John, "the disciple of the Lord," respecting the period for the celebration of Easter. But as Keim, Wittichen, Holtzmann, and Scholten have perceived, the master of Polycarp may very well have been a "disciple of the Lord," without being the Apostle John. All, then, that can be drawn from Irenæus's recollections of his early days is that Polycarp had apparently been acquainted with someone of the name of John who had personally known the Lord.

The Bishop of Lyons (Irenæus) usually designates the John of Polycarp precisely in the same way as Papias designates the John whom he had seen and heard: *ὁ τοῦ κυρίου μαθητής*. It cannot be doubtful, from what Eusebius reports, that Irenæus and Polycarp looked upon this John as the apostle; for the former at least knew only of one who had taught at Ephesus as the successor of Paul, written the Apocalypse and the Gospel, and died at a great age in the reign of Trajan. But there was in Asia Minor, as Papias bears witness, another John, "Presbyteros Joannes," who in the eyes of the second generation of Christians passed for a "disciple of the Lord," and who finished by being ranked among the apostles.

Thus is clearly explained the confusion that resulted from the misconception of Polycarp and Irenæus.

The tradition puts in line two Johns, two Jew-Christians, both of whom coming late in life into Asia Minor, were put to death and buried at Ephesus, about the year 100 A.D., as their tombs bear witness! The name, age, date, place, even the very acts and doctrines of those two Dromios were identical! But, further, the early recollections of Irenæus respecting his intercourse with Polycarp had apparently become so faint, from lapse of time, as to have caused him in the Epistle to Florinus, which is attributed to him and probably was by him, to speak of Polycarp's John as the author of the Gospel of the Word (Logos). But Polycarp, whose sayings Irenæus strove to recollect, had no knowledge of the fourth Gospel, and could not, therefore have spoken in that sense to Irenæus.

From this it is clear that the early recollections of the bishop had become strangely mixed up with his later impressions. To sum up, the John who is presented to us by Irenæus as a millenarian is identical not only with the John of Papias, who is similarly described, but with the John of the Apocalypse. The efforts which were made, as early as the third century, by some of the Fathers of the Greek Church, to attribute the Apocalypse to John the Presbyter, are well-known. The critical and philological scrutiny to which Denys of Alexandria submitted the text of that book by contrasting it with the text of the fourth Gospel, is quite a model of sound literary discussion.

This Presbyter John, born, perhaps, about the year 20 A.D., might have "seen the Lord," whose death probably took place in 35 A.D. It was he, and not the son of Zebedee, who, after the ministry of Paul in Asia Minor, propagated in that region the Jew-Christian doctrines, the millenarian ones in particular, by reason of which the Apocalypse is more a Jewish than a Christian book—"the book, *par excellence*, of Jewish arrogance."*

* Even in the kingdom of heaven the circumcised and uncircumcised saints were not to be on an equal footing. The Apocalypse

Later on the Church, which, like all human institutions, was obliged, under pain of perishing, to reconcile and accept contrary doctrines, lost the recollections, in Asia as at Rome, of the intestine conflict between the Judaising and the Hellenising parties. The differences about doctrine having been made up, the traditions concerning the apostles personally were, as a matter of course, harmonised ; John was placed by the side of Paul in Asia, in the same way as Peter had been put in companionship with the apostle of the Gentiles in Rome.

(xxii., 22) rewards the twelve tribes of Israel with the solid fruit of the Tree of Life, but reserves for the Gentiles only a medicinal decoction of the leaves.

CHAPTER VI.

SO early as the end of the first century the spirit of conciliation and peace had made great progress in the Church. The Epistle to the Corinthians, attributed to Clement of Rome, is replete therewith. This document, whose antiquity is undoubted, let the author be whom he may, breathes the sublime unction and majesty of the Roman pontiffs.

As time progressed, those pompous phrases, flowing smoothly and monotonously, such as we find in that epistle, began no longer to arrest attention, those constantly repeated hyperboles failed to make much impression, and the apostolic benedictions themselves ceased to have any more significance than the stereotyped forms of official procedure. But belonging as they do to the first century, the Clementine Epistles are highly characteristic of the then situation of the Church. They bear witness to the fading of the recollections of the early intestine discords; they attest that in the west the doctrines of Peter and the Jew-Christians of Jerusalem had overcome, by absorbing them, the doctrines of Paul, and that the principle of authority had taken the place of liberty and the hierarchy of grace.* The

* [The gradual extinction of one of the militant parties rather than pacification, was the course that events took in the church. After the fall of Jerusalem the Jews made no more proselytes. The general defection to Christianity of the Gentiles who had joined themselves to their body disgusted them with proselytism. Strict orthodoxy became the order of the day throughout the Jewish communities and the sign of loyalty to Israel. Henceforth there were no more Philos or Hillels, and the synagogues ceased to furnish converts to Christianity. Being no longer recruited from among the Jews the Ebionites died out.

There is little reason to think that the Jew-Christian party made any concessions, or ever accepted the writings of Paul. It was only by a one-sided arrangement, and not a mutual one, that the fourteen epistles written by or attributed to Paul, which constitute more than one half of the New Testament, were admitted into the canon.

primacy of the Church of Rome was begun, for the Clementine epistles speak the language of ecclesiastical rule. There were still no doubt churches, but the official collective Church was constituted.

The authorship of this important document, which in all probability dates from about the year 97 A.D., has been ascribed by Zeller and some other critics to Titus Flavius Clemens, cousin-german of Domitian, who had for wife Flavia Domitilla, granddaughter of Vespasian. At the expiration of his consulship in 96, this Flavius Clemens was, as we know, arrested by order of Domitian and put to death with other persons "who had adopted Jewish customs."* Renan dissents from this opinion, giving as his principal reason that the epistles in question are much too Jewish to be by the hand of a true Roman, such as was Flavius Clemens. He considers their author not to have been a Gentile, but a Jew by blood. The Clementines, however, are not in the least Judaising, although they make abundant reference to the Old Testament. Their author possessed notions of cosmography and history very superior to any found in Jewish compositions. The tone and stately style of the epistles, their long periods in the classical manner, everything seems to point to a man of the Latin race. But the problem concerning their authorship is not one whose solution is of much importance. Few really believe the epistles which have come down to us under the name of Clement to be the work of any individual of that name, the almost universal opinion being that they are a collective production of the Roman Church of the first century. The personage to whom tradition has attributed them had afterwards fathered upon him a considerable number of apocryphal pieces, the whole constituting what have been called the "Clementine

Peter was retained by the side of Paul because the Church was no longer alive to the circumstance that he had had any serious difference with the apostle of the Gentiles. The principle of authority can hardly be referred more to Peter than to Paul; it is essentially sacerdotal, and would have asserted itself whichever of the apostles came to the front.]

* Dion. Cass., lxxvii., 14: τὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἔθνη.

writings." As to the actual writer whose style of composition characterises them, he was for certain a true Christian of Rome, some *episcopus* of the Roman Church.

As to Flavius Clemens himself, the notion that he was a Christian rests on no solid ground whatever. Neither Suetonius nor Dion Cassius has implied that there was against him anything more than the adoption of Jewish customs. Had a nephew of Vespasian become a Christian, Tertullian, Eusebius, Jerome would certainly have spoken of a fact so important. And if there is nothing to show that Flavius Clemens was a Christian, there is still less evidence—that is, absolutely none at all—to favor the notion that other members of the Flavian family were Christians. It is true that Flavius Clemens, Flavia Domitilla, and their intimates, as were Titus and the Jew coterie of the imperial circle, were apparently rather favorable than the contrary to the Christians. Besides the Jews of that circle, such as Agrippa, Berenice, Josephus, there were others who manifested goodwill towards the Nazarine community. The Proselytes—those who, without being either Jews or Christians, observed what were called the "Noachic precepts" and kept the Sabbath—in short, who "lived after the manner of the Jews"—could not fail to recognise the Christians as brethren.* Of such, beyond doubt, were Flavius Clemens and Flavia Domitilla.

* [It was quite natural that the proselytes to Judaism should recognise as brethren the converts to Christianity, for, in accepting the Gospel, the convert had to receive the Hebrew scriptures, to adopt Jehovah for his god, and to submit to the baptismal rite whereby female proselytes, if not sometimes men also, were admitted within the Jewish pale. It would, indeed, be strictly accurate to say that in becoming a Christian the Pagan was required in the first instance to become a Jew in everything but circumcision and some other observances of minor importance. The Jewish worship as practised in the thousands of synagogues throughout the world (according to the Talmud there were 460 synagogues in Jerusalem)—everywhere, in short, except in the Temple—differed in nothing, as to form at least, from that of the Church. Both synagogue and church were, in fact, described by the same word in Greek—namely, *ἐκκλησία*, "meeting-house."

Ever since the triumph of Christianity, the Jews have so entirely

In prosecuting them, therefore, Domitian did not persecute Christianity. The religious count of the accusation was only a pretext; the true reason for the execution of the one and the banishment of the other was political. But the ghastly tales of persecution by Domitian, which are mere inventions of the ecclesiastical writers, required to be supported by something in the guise of precise statement. Christian victims had to be named, and Clemens and Domitilla were made to do duty for the occasion.

In ancient as in modern times the Cæsars have hardly ever had for historians any but detractors or flatterers. Tacitus, it is true, undertook to tell their story *sine ira et studio*, but utterly failed to be impartial.

One of the great merits of Renan's chapters on this head is that he has been able to keep himself as free from hatred as from favor; for, with the single exception of Mommsen, he has better than other writers apprehended the essential principle of the

abandoned proselytising as to have caused it to be forgotten that previously, and especially under the emperors of the Julian family, conversions to Judaism were very common. The rabbinical worship, which had become the everyday expression of the Jewish religion, and which consisted in the simple congregational service of the synagogue, wherefrom sacerdotal rites and sacrifices were excluded and wherein strangers were permitted to participate, came to have attractions for speculative minds, who by reason of the general cultivation of the doctrines of the Stoics and the widespread indoctrination in the esoteric tenets of the Pagan mysteries, had acquired distaste for the puerilities practised at the shrines of the heathen divinities. This movement was greatly promoted by the dissemination throughout the world of the Jews, who were in consequence able to exercise an almost universal propagandism. "For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogue every Sabbath-day" (Acts xv., 21).

It is a very prevalent idea that the dissemination of the Jews was the result of a dispersion which followed the capture and destruction of Jerusalem; but, in truth, it is very doubtful whether that event added much, if at all, to the number of Jews domiciled abroad. Nearly twenty years before the Jewish war Philo had made a boast of the vast number of the non-Palestinian Jews. "For no one country," he writes, "can contain the whole Jewish nation by reason of its populousness; for which cause they frequent all the most prosperous and fertile countries of Europe and Asia, whether islands or continents, looking, indeed, upon the Holy City as their metropolis, wherein is erected the sacred temple of the Most High God, but accounting those

personal sovereignty of the emperors—the necessity and consequent legitimacy of that political institution which was the only possible condition of peace for the Roman world.

Besides the Jews and Christians of whom we are about to speak, the Julian and Flavian Cæsars had hardly worse enemies than the so-called “philosophers.” It has occasionally been claimed as a great honor for philosophy to have been persecuted in common with Christianity. Such fallacies put forward in high-sounding phrases ought to be left for writers like Tertullian and the Christian apologists. Neither Nero nor Domitian, who like Vespasian, banished “the philosophers,” ever officially persecuted the adherents of Christianity on account of their religious tenets. Nor were those *savants* and philosophers who did not busy themselves with politics ever brought to trial. Renan, therefore, has been faithful to accurate history when, in his book *Les Apôtres*, he insists on the

regions which have been occupied by their fathers, grandfathers, great grandfathers, and still more remote ancestors, in which they have been born and brought up, as their country” (Adv. Flacc. c., vii.).

No long-established religion prior to the rise of Christianity, which itself, indeed, is but an offshoot therefrom, perpetuating its proselytising proclivities, ever made more converts than Judaism. Taking advantage of the latitude that was permitted to proselytes in the second degree, many Romans in Rome itself took to following Jewish customs; while in some of the provincial cities large sections of the community went so far as to separate themselves formally from their fellow citizens. This was especially the case at Antioch, in Syria, where, according to Josephus, “the Jews constantly made proselytes of a great many of the Greeks, and thereby, after a sort, brought them to be a portion of their own body” (Wars vii., 3, 2). So strong were the proselytising tendencies of the Jews of this period that Jesus is represented reproaching the scribes and pharisees with “compassing sea and land to make one convert,” like our own missionary societies (Matt. xxiii., 15).

Among the converts to Judaism personages of high rank were not wanting. Of such were the royal family of Adiabene, including Izates, the king. The mother of this prince, Helena, was so ardent an adherent of Judaism that she took up her residence in Jerusalem and died there, after causing to be erected in her lifetime a monumental tomb which escaped uninjured from the double desecration of the Holy City, and whereof Pausanias, the Greek traveller, has left a very curious account (viii. 16). Prince Crapta, the cousin of Izates, had also a palace at Jerusalem (Jos. Wars iv. 34, 8).

To judge from the passage in Acts respecting the conversion to the

fact that in the matter of freedom of opinion the Roman authorities maintained the liberal traditions handed down by the dynasties that sprang from the Macedonian conquest—the Attalas and the Ptolemies. “Among the Roman laws anterior to Constantine,” to use his words, “there was not a single ordinance directed against freedom of thought; in the history of the Pagan emperors not a single persecution on account of mere doctrines or creeds.”*

What could fussy haranguers such as those, hungering after popularity, and, above all, dying to exhibit their abilities, have in common with true philosophers? In order to have any success with the malcontent lower classes, they were obliged to be superficial and frivolous. Those sham philosophers, whose harangues had the same attractions for the people as the performances of popular comedians, had adopted the stale but pretentious style of the flashy lecturer. With cries such as “Cato,” “Brutus,” “liberty,” and others of the

faith in Jesus of the eunuch of the Queen of Ethiopia, it would appear that in the court circle of that country, too, Jewish proselytes were to be found. At this time, therefore, which was probably in the reign of Claudius, when as yet Jewish fanaticism had not turned the whole of the Roman world against Israel, and for some thirty or more years subsequently, it could truly be said in the words of the Gospel: “Many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven” Matt. viii., 11; Luke xiii., 28, 29.]

* [The New Testament writers have left abundant evidence of the spirit of toleration with which the Roman authorities treated religious opinions. Throughout the evangelical narrative wherever the constituted authorities are represented as interfering with apostles or disciples such interference is seen to be uniformly at the instance of the orthodox Jews, who, being well aware that the Roman magistrates would not listen to charges involving only questions of religion, usually trumped up a false accusation of sedition in order to establish a *prima facie* case. Even in the instance of Jesus himself this was done. The real offence laid to his charge by the Jewish priests and the Sanhedrin was heresy; but in order to make out a case that would lie, an accusation of sedition was added. Sufficient proof of the latter accusation having been forthcoming, the prisoner was brought within the scope of the Roman law and had merited death; for the mere admission by Jesus that he was the Messiah was enough in the eyes of the Romans, since every Messianic pretender was a revolutionary. But even then Pilate, divining, no doubt, the motives of his accusers (“for he knew that the chief priests had delivered him from envy,” Mark xv., 10), and having

sort they brought down the plaudits of the multitude. Such and nothing else was the philosophy in question. And this miserable kind of political antagonism is what has been called the noble struggle of the philosophers against Nero and Domitian !

The age of the Roman emperors was evidently one wherein it was worse than folly to dream of the establishment of virtuous democracies. The condition of the populace, even in the most civilized of the provinces, and the circumstances of the far-extending empire itself, were not such as comported with any form of government but the autocratic. In repressing the spirit of rebellion which occasionally manifested itself, the Cæsars only acted in self-defence and for the preservation of the commonwealth. Patriots and martyrs are somewhat high-sounding names to give to visionary, declamatory, and self-sufficient demagogues, whose career was cut short by the strong arm of the law. At all events there is a decided want of

formed a rational estimate of the hallucinate character of the accused, would have willingly let him go. Could the Roman procurator, who " marvelled " at the mutism of Jesus (Mark xv., 5) have better expressed his contemptuous commiseration for him and his religious fancies than by asking : " Will ye that I release the king of the Jews ? Why, what evil hath he done ? " Had Pilate seen in Jesus not a crazy religious enthusiast, but a seriously dangerous political aspirant to the throne of David, he would never have hesitated in sending him to the stake.

When Paul, by his orthodox Jewish brethren, was accused before Gallio, governor of Achaia, of heresy, unaccompanied by any other charge, that excellent instance of a Roman magistrate behaved precisely as would a British judge in India. " If it were a matter of wrong or wickedness," he said, " it would become me to hear you Jews ; but as for questions of words and names of your religious laws I will be no judge of such matters ; and he drove them from the judgment seat " (Acts xviii., 14—16).

The final arrest and detention of Paul was accomplished by a trumped-up accusation of sedition : in order to get the Roman authorities to take cognisance of the case he was charged with being " a pestilent mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world." This was perceived by the procurator Festus ; for in his report to King Agrippa about Paul he says : " Against whom when the accusers stood up they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed, but had certain questions against him of their own superstitions." Such contemptible Jewish wranglings constituted no ground of accusation in a Roman court. In the eyes of Festus, Paul, instead of being a criminal

fitness in representing the Christian martyrs going to everlasting glory in company with a parcel of seditious spouters.

As to the frocked friars and such like going about with staff and wallet, it may easily be guessed to what extent they were cultivators of science and philosophy. When they were not vulgar charlatans, hypocritical confessors, testamentary expectants, or the parasites of the great and wealthy, these Cynics and bastard Stoics were rogues and ill-conditioned demagogues, turbulent democrats, irreconcilable enemies of Roman society. Tiberius in his time held in particular aversion such gentry; Vespasian, like Nero, and afterwards Domitian, was obliged to adopt rigorous measures with some of their leaders. Although it pained him grievously to condemn to death such dogs on account of their persistent barking after him,* he, of all men the most humane and liberal, felt himself obliged to sanction the execution of Helvidius Priscus, fit son-in-law of Thræsea.

Suetonius and Dion Cassius bear witness to the insolent effrontery of that dangerous fool who herded on the mob against the emperor. Domitian in his turn was forced to put to death the son of Helvidius as well as Rusticus Arulenus, Herennius Senecion, and Maternus, all opposition speechifiers, masters in the art

was only a crazy fanatic, whom he would have liberated but for his having lodged an appeal to Rome on the whole case (Acts xxv., 19—25; xxvi., 24—32).

The inability on the part of the Roman authorities to find anything worthy of punishment in the things laid to the charge of Paul by the Jews was apparently experienced also in Rome, for we are told that the apostle "dwelt two whole years in his own hired house and received all that came unto him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no man forbidding him" (Acts xxviii., 30, 31). Yet this was close upon the time, if not at the very time, when Nero, as is said, delivered to wild beasts and the flames large numbers of Christians because of their belief in the very doctrines that Paul was freely permitted to teach!

So far as concerns Europe, the Jews, with their abominable hierarchical government, were the originators of pains and penalties on account of religion.]

* Suet., Vesp. 13.

of pointing political allusions, eulogising in every key the Brutuses, the Thrases, and the Priscuses, partly to make a point against the reigning prince, but especially to render themselves popular and "gain the applause of the hearers." *Hinc ingentes existere ascensus, hinc in ipsiis auditoriis præcipue laudari, et mox omnium sermonibus ferri.**

The formal accusation against Flavius Clemens no doubt was impiety, inasmuch as he had adopted Jewish customs. In the eyes of every Roman of rank that was tantamount to lese-majesty, particularly on the part of a member of the imperial family and one so near the person of the emperor. But the real motive for his condemnation was political. Domitian had designated as his successor and heir to the imperial dignity the son of this very Flavius Clemens, who, by entering the ranks of the Jews, made himself the scorn of every true Roman, as had been in his day, but for other reasons, his father, Flavius Sabinus. As we see to be the case at the present time in the autocratic countries of the East, the Roman emperors, from fear of court or military intrigue, were often forced or betrayed into immolating their relatives and familiars, as well as eminent commanders and popular leaders, anyone, in short, qualified to head an insurrection or suspected of putting forward dangerous pretensions. Such palace and dynastic assassinations, for they are nothing else, are no doubt to be deplored, but they would seem to be one of the baneful conditions of absolute rule in times when human life is held of little value.

But if, at a distance from the jealous and suspicious eye of the Cæsar, the people at large lived in peace and plenty, if autocracy, with all its defects, was yet the only government possible under the existing circumstances of the period, of what use is it to revive and repeat the declamations of the ancient rhetorists against tyrants? In spite of all that has been laid to the charge of Nero himself, that versatile and unhappy prince was able to claim the credit for his government of having given peace to the entire Roman world,

* Tacit. Dial. de Orat., 10.

which had been one of the chief glories of Augustus. Several of the extant coins of his reign represent the Temple of Janus closed and ornamented externally with flowers.* Domitian, for certain, knew better than some modern scholars what was required for his own security and that of the empire. In words stamped with bitter sadness he complained that princes were not believed to have foundation for their suspicions as to plots and treasons until after they had fallen victims to them : *Conditionem principum miserrimam dicebat, quibus de conjuratione comperta non crederetur, nisi occisis.*† Let us see what came of the imperial clemency in one instance.

Instead of putting to death Flavia Domitilla, wife of Flavius Clemens, who, like her husband, had been accused of proselytising to Judaism, Domitian contented himself with banishing her to the Island of Pandateria. This misplaced clemency cost him his life. Domitilla and the retainers of her late husband managed to continue their conspiracy against Domitian. His steward, a freedman of his own, aided by a scoundrel of the name of Stephen, having thrown him off his guard by means of a stratagem, struck him the first blow with a stiletto. If the name Stephen might very well belong to a Christian, this bloody deed was hardly in accordance with Christian professions. Anyhow, such were some of the effects of the Judaising proclivities of Flavius Clemens, the practical results of the "pure worship," the "elevated morality," of those Jews of Rome whose religion, according to Renan, "breathed the pure atmosphere of a heavenly kingdom." Was it surprising that Tiberius, whose knowledge of men was great, in a previous generation had condemned to transportation to Sardinia four thousand of those dangerous Levantines, and that Domitian, who was not without reason severe towards Romans accused of Jew proselytism, levied with rigor the tax on the Israelites?

Did not the vanquished of Titus owe to Jupiter

* Preller : *Romanische Mythologie*, p. 156 ; Berlin, 1865.

† Suet. Domit., 20.

Capitalinus the legal capitation; and when it came to be collected were not the circumcised in the habit of swearing to the tax-collector that they were uncircumcised? What better means of ascertaining their status than by corporal inspection!*

We will not stop to inquire whether it was judicious to levy that tax on Romans who only partially adopted Jewish customs; on the *improfessi*, as they were called, who only lived after the manner of the Jews;† but will rest satisfied with remarking that the circumcision of those who were not Jews by blood was by law prohibited under the severest penalties. In descanting on "the frightful thirst for blood with which Domitian pursued the whole of Jewish society," Renan has but drawn on his imagination. Domitian's measures were directed against Roman proselytes to Judaism, who, in the opinion of all good citizens, were guilty of treason to their country. Neither he nor his predecessors officially persecuted the Jewish religion nor yet the Jews. When, on the report reaching his ears that there still existed descendants of the royal family of Judæa, he caused, as Eusebius has reported, the grand-

* [Corporal inspection was indeed quite in keeping with what had originally been the chief practical object of circumcision. Considering the situation of this caste-mark its use for that purpose, it is true, entailed something very like the manners of dogs. But the populations among whom circumcision took its rise, and of whom representatives survive in the shape of some of the lowest tribes of savages, were but little removed from the beasts. Whatever may have been the primary source of the custom, whether substitution for a more serious mutilation to which captives and slaves were subjected, or a self-imposed ordeal, so soon as it became a tribe or caste distinction it was as a means of recognition that, in practice, it mainly had value. Anyhow, the savage and prehistoric origin of the circumcision sign is indicated by the use, among the Hebrew patriarchs, of the flint knife in the performance of the operation. (Ex. iv., 25).—"The Early Spread of Circumcision," by Sir G. H. Rose; Lond. 1846. "La Circoncision, sa signification et ses origines," par Elie Reclus: *Rev. Internal. Scien.* No. 3, pp. 193—229; Paris, 1879. "Principles of Sociology," by Herbert Spencer, vol. II, p. 68; Lond. 1879.]

† [That is, who kept the Sabbath and abstained from the flesh of forbidden animals, and that of licit animals not slaughtered in orthodox fashion—thereby becoming useless members of society one whole day in every seven, and rendering it impossible for them, without risk of losing caste, to eat at the same board with their fellow citizens.]

sons of Judas, brother of Jesus, to be brought from Batanea, Domitian, finding them on interrogation to be simple peasants, sent them back to their country scatheless.*

The liberal treatment of the Jews by the Romans was all the more meritorious considering that never did conquered people rise in insurrection, and that on more than one occasion, with such mad rage. This was seen throughout the Jewish war, and particularly at the siege of Jerusalem, where Vespasian and Titus were forced to crush by thousands their opponents, who, frenzied with fanaticism and lost to reason, conducted themselves more like wild beasts than human beings. Not a year passed afterwards without bringing forth some rancorous prediction of the fall of Rome. In the Book of the Apocalypse are to be seen applied to the Roman capital all the declamations of the ancient prophets against Tyre and Babylon, the Apocalypsemongers being in constant expectation of the arrival of what they were pleased to call "the day of Edom." Lying in wait for the first misfortune that should overthrow the Empire, the Jews, whenever they fancied they had descried a storm brewing, shouted with joy in anticipation of the Roman reverses. The wild dream of a Jewish Empire, succeeding to the rule of Rome, never ceased to feed their delusive hopes. It has been the fate of Israel to curse in turn every one of those great governments whereby civilisation has been most promoted. So far as the Jews were concerned, the entire Western world had in vain become Roman; they obstinately refused to have any part in it, choosing to the end to remain Israelites.† To understand what

* Euseb. H. E. iii., 20.

† [Being, in fact, a caste rather than a people, the Jews must always remain separate. Without ceasing to be Jews they cannot identify themselves by intermarriage with the rest of the population in the countries where they have chosen to pasture. Denizens of most countries, they are truly citizens of none; for, like the Jesuits, they owe, first of all, allegiance to a society which in their eyes is paramount to the state. The Jews are still the parasite people they were in the days of the Roman Empire; and, like all parasites, they instinctively feel that it is their business to prey upon that whereon they happen to have been deposited.]

such pretensions on the part of a whole people practically amounted to, we have only to call to mind the constant state of political fermentation in which Judæa had remained from the time of the Macchabees.

Resistance to the sway of Rome was not folly merely, but a downright crime—that of lese-civilisation. Could anything more monstrous be conceived than to set up the civic anarchy, the absolute want of all superior culture, and the wretched superstitions of the Jews against the civilisation, science, and doctrines of the Græco-Roman world, and the “immense majesty” of the internal peace conferred by Roman rule—*immensa majestas pacis Romani*, as Pliny puts it? If the raving rabbis and fanatical Pharisees, who would not have shrunk from offering up a whole Gentile population as a hecatomb to their god of battles and blood, had been but able, they would have made a clean sweep of the ennobling Hellenic culture in all its ramifications.

What audacity on the part of those miserable Levantines to dare to defy the West! Jerusalem, forsooth, fancying herself Carthage! She had, it is true, the same doom, without, however, having had the glory of jeopardising Rome like the city of Hannibal. Titus, in the year 70 of our era, levelled to the ground the temple of the Jew god, who was also that of the Christians. Under the Emperor Hadrian a fresh and utterly insensate revolt, entailing still more terrible consequences, fomented by the rabbi Akiba, with the pretended Messiah Bar-Kosiba as leader, was suppressed in seas of blood by Julius Severus. On this occasion the ground where the temple had stood was ploughed up. After the triumph of Titus this was the greatest victory of civilisation over theocracy and barbarism.

The Jews were not only declared enemies of the empire, they were social pests. Society from time to time was forced to condescend to turn upon those rapacious aliens, who were ever ready to claim the advantages of whatever rights seemed to them to be theirs, without considering themselves bound by any obligations of duty. It has always been the belief of the chosen people that god ordained the rest of mankind to work for them. Add to this that the true Jew

"was destitute of our instincts of honor, highmindedness, delicacy of feeling, and taste."* So marked was this moral baseness that there was universally attached to the name Judæus the sense of something mean and odious, as may be gathered from the classical literature of the ancients. There must have been a reason for this general antipathy. Rigorous treatment at the hands of so great a variety of governments could not have been adopted without some motive. For certain that motive was not the desire to interfere with the worship of the Jews.† If the few cases wherein pious Israelites had refused to sacrifice to idols or to the image of an emperor ‡ be excepted, never did the mere profession of Judaism entail persecution.

* Renan: *L'Antéchrist*, p. 252.

† [They had, by permission, their synagogues in thousands all over the Roman Empire.]

‡ [It would be a grave error to see in such sporadic instances of personal illtreatment anything of the nature of the systematic persecution which was the object of the laws made against Paganism by the Christian emperors, and whereof we have the most complete example in the proceedings of the Roman Catholic Inquisition. What evidently dictated the proceedings against individuals who on certain occasions refused to sacrifice to idols or to the effigies of emperors was the desire to punish contumacy; whereas in the truly religious persecutions of Pagans by the Christian emperors, as in those conducted by the Inquisition, the intention was to force abjuration of certain heretical doctrines, or in the event of resistance or refusal, their suppression by the destruction of the recalcitrant professors of them. This kind of persecution was absolutely unknown to the Greeks and Romans, because variety in religious names and rites being by Polytheism looked upon as natural, the motive for religious intolerance and hate was absent. The gods of the Pagan pantheon were the spirits of nature, all the physical and moral forces of the universe. It was consequently not conceived that there could be any others, and foreign or strange deities were merely considered to be those spiritual forces under different names and dresses. In the so-called monotheistic religions only is there room for the growth of that fanatical hatred which prompts to the extermination of all rival religious faiths, as pertaining to what is supposed to be inimical to the true god, or, in short, diabolical. The professors and adherents of such religions have always been of a fanatical and persecuting spirit. Of this we have notorious instances in the ancient Persians, the Jews, the Christians, and the Mahomedans, whose histories are little else than fanaticism in action. Polytheism, on the contrary, was incapable of engendering religious persecution. The spirit of the Inquisition was utterly unknown to the Romans, and had no existence in the empire until after it had, by becoming Christian, embraced the detestable theocratic principles of the Jews.]

It was otherwise with Christianity, at least from the time of the Emperor Trajan. Previous to his reign, when proceedings were taken against the Christians it was because they were considered as a body to be dangerous for the State, "men infected with new and dangerous superstitions," as they are called by Suetonius, who, like Tacitus, approved of Nero's having sent to the stake those "men detested for their abominations": *per flagitia inuisos*. It was also to appease the public rumor, which accused them of having set fire to Rome, that Nero, by way of what was called *piaculum*, immolated a certain number as expiatory victims.*

* [This, and what has been said on the same matter in Chapter V., probably contain the statement of the case which would have been made by a Roman on admitting the reality of the event. But it is extremely doubtful whether the relation which acquaints us with the alleged atrocities be anything more than a tale having only some slight foundation in fact, and representing rather the need which the Christian society of a later age came to have for early martyrs to refer to and boast of, than a circumstantial account of an actual occurrence. The sole authority for the horrible transaction is the passage in the "Annals of Tacitus" that contains the relation of it, the authenticity of which—though generally admitted—is really hardly more irreproachable than that of the passages interpolated into the texts of Josephus, and the numerous other ecclesiastical forgeries which modern criticism has detected and exposed. If the testimony may be relied on of Johannes de Spire, from whose single uncontrolled manuscript copy of the works of the Roman historian—first published by him in Venice in the year 1468—all other copies have come, the passage existed in the Annals in the eighth century, at which period the MS. in question purported to have been written. But there are very good reasons for thinking that the copies of the writings of Tacitus, which were in the hands of Eusebius in the beginning of the fourth century, of Tertullian at the commencement of the third century, and of Clement of Alexandria towards the end of the second century, did not contain it. There is no trace whatever of its existence before the fifteenth century, not a single writer of antiquity having referred to it. It is almost impossible that it could have been contained in the Annals which were in circulation in the age of Eusebius without it having been mentioned by him, seeing the immense pains he took to hunt up evidence of the very kind that this passage would have afforded him. When we find him adducing and quoting such evidently spurious authorities as the correspondence between Jesus and Abgarus, the Sibylline verses, and a pretended divine revelation from the god Apollo, we may be sure that, had he known this account, in the works of Tacitus, of the earliest and most dreadful of all the persecutions of the Christians, he would not have failed to make use of it. Although Tertullian had read the books of Tacitus, and has in several instances quoted his words, he makes no

From time to time the security of the State seemed to demand the banishment in a body, as was the case under Tiberius, of such dangerous elements of the population as Jews, astrologers, devotees of Isis and Serapis, who swarmed in Rome as in a common sewer. In the eyes of the contemporaries of Nero and Domitian the Christians were of that class—a secret society with revolutionary tendencies.

No more than the Jews did the Christians of that age consider themselves bound to absolute submission to purely civil government. This world being for

mention of those, the most important of all for his purpose, concerning the existence of large numbers of Christians in the reign of Nero and their cruel treatment. Had the "Annals of Tacitus," which were in the hands of Tertullian, contained this passage, it is very unlikely that he would have spoken of their author as "the most prating of liars"—*loquacissimus mendaciorum*—as he has done (Apol. adv. Gent., xvi.). Finally, Clement of Alexandria, who set himself the task of collecting and adducing all the Pagan admissions relative to Christianity as a religion before his own time, is as mute on the subject as all the others.

The non-existence in Tacitus of the passage in question, in the early centuries, is rendered still more certain by the circumstance that something very like it is found in the Sacred History of Sulpicius Severus, a Christian writer of Gaul who flourished about 422 A.D., but without any reference to Tacitus. The sentence wherein the author enumerates the various tortures inflicted on the Christians is precisely the same as the parallel sentence in the passage in Tacitus, with the exception of the phrase *plerique in id reservati*, which, in the latter, is represented by the words *aliique ubi*. But the greater correctness of the expression used by Severus clearly indicates that it was from his book or some such Christian work that the passage about Christ and the Christians now found in Tacitus was subsequently concocted, the inaccuracy creeping in in the process; for it is totally inadmissible that Severus could improve upon the language of his accomplished predecessor. (Sulp. Sev., Hist. Sacrae., lib. II., c. xxix.).

There is, it is true, in the life of Nero, as drawn by Suetonius, a short entry which, if authentic, would confirm the passage in Tacitus. But it also may, without hesitation, be considered an interpolation made with the express purpose of supporting the more detailed forgery; for it is inserted in an irrelevant manner between two phrases referring to municipal regulations, the one affecting eating-houses and the other coachmen, which evidently were originally consecutive.

We have, moreover, in another passage of Suetonius, which is beyond suspicion, evidence that Nero was not in the habit of indulging in a lust for bloody public exhibitions. While unstintedly laying to his charge a long array of crimes, the biographer of the Cæsars has been

them the kingdom of the Prince of Darkness, they saw in every functionary, in every magistrate, in every Cæsar, a limb of Satan. Particular texts, it is true, may be quoted wherein the Christian leaders exhorted their brethren to respect the powers that be.* It was not, however, as being in themselves and by their very nature legitimate, but inasmuch as they appeared to be permitted by the divine will, that the established authorities were to be respected. And, finally, Paul, in whose writings submission is recommended—Paul, who held human reason in contempt, one of the worst enemies of civilisation—was not without insight into

impartial enough to put on record that Nero, in the displays wherewith he treated the public in the circus, took particular care that no human lives were sacrificed, not even those of condemned criminals—*neminem occidit, ne noxorem quidem*.

Nevertheless, the many enemies which Nero had made by the unconcealed profligacy of his life and his unscrupulous and sanguinary actions in the circle of the court, took their revenge by vilifying his memory without reserve. He was charged with having himself been the author of the great fire, and with having made it an occasion for amusement, by publicly gloating over the scene of devastation accompanied by his musicians, notwithstanding that (as we learn from Tacitus) he was not at the time at Rome, but residing at Antium (Ann. xv., 39). By none was he more detested and feared than by the Jews, who never could forget that it was by his sanction that the war which had ended in their complete discomfiture was undertaken, and whose hatred and dread were probably intensified on account of his devotion to the Syrian goddess, a divinity who, in the eyes of the Jews, was "the abomination of abominations." In those sentiments the Christians, who were in truth a kind of Jews, fully shared. To the children of Israel Nero was the impersonation of all that was inimical and obnoxious; it was but natural that by the Christians he should be made the type of persecutors—the anti-Christ himself.

A Christian tale charging Nero with hostility was, however, current in the second century, for an allusion thereto is found in the "Apology of Melito, Bishop of Sardis," written presumably about 170 A.D., which Eusebius has quoted. We there read: "Only Nero and Domitian, through the persuasion of certain envious and malicious persons, were disposed to bring our doctrine into contempt;" but the statement, so far as it bears on the charge of systematic persecution, is qualified by the admission that "pious men are now persecuted and harassed throughout all Asia by new decrees which was not heretofore done: τὸ γὰρ οὐδὲ πάποτε γένομενον."—Mel. Apol. ad Antonin., Lardner, apud Euseb. cit.]

* [The fact of there being such texts to some extent proves the existence of the state of feeling which rendered the exhortations necessary.]

many things which the contracted mind of a Jew-Christian of Jerusalem or Rome could not conceive.

From the Apocalypse—that strange patchwork of fragments from Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and other sources—some idea may be formed of the political views and aspirations of the Christians of the primitive stamp: The time is drawing nigh; Jesus the Messiah is on the point of claiming the kingdom; the dead in Christ and the saints will rise, and during a thousand years reign over the nations, with Christ for king, in an earthly paradise; Rome being destroyed, there will be no longer any civil government nor Cæsars; the people of the whole earth will come to Jerusalem to pay homage to the Messiah; when the thousand years shall be accomplished the Devil will be let loose for a time, and evil will again come upon the world; but after a new victory over Satan the final and general resurrection will take place; all those whose names are written in the Book of Life will enjoy, during ages of ages, infinite felicity under the refuge of a new sky; in the midst of Jerusalem the Father and the Lamb will be seen seated on the throne, the damned, whose names are not in the Book of Life, being thrown into the lake of fire.

This wild conception of the final destiny of the human race is the sum and substance of the Jew and Christian wisdom of the first century of grace.

To return once more to Domitian, it is not possible to quote from any classical author a single passage making the slightest reference to proceedings against Christians in his reign; the only grounds for assertions to that effect are the vague allegations of the ecclesiastical writers. But the "apologists" are false witnesses. It is allowable to suspect their good faith when they are found representing the good emperors as having been favorable to Christianity and the unscrupulous tyrants as the persecutors. It was the very contrary.

The emperors who initiated the adoption of legal measures against the religion of Jesus were Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus, and Marcus Aurelius—all the great and good emperors of the second century. Renan

has very correctly remarked that previous to the time of Trajan recourse was not had, even in a single case, to any penal enactment against Christianity. The law against illicit societies, no doubt, existed, and could be more or less arbitrarily used against obnoxious associations; but Trajan was the first emperor consciously and with intent to prosecute citizens on the single charge of being Christians. From his reign the profession of Christianity was illegal and its penalty death.*

We may be quite sure that it was not without sufficient reason, nor merely out of wanton caprice or insensate antipathy, that the policy of repression was adopted against Christianity, that the era of Christian martyrs was made to commence in what was the true golden age of Rome—a period characterised by the greatest liberality in matters of speculative opinion which the world has, perhaps ever seen, and rendered illustrious by the wisest and most beneficent rulers known in the entire range of universal history.

Had Christianity been like the religions of antiquity

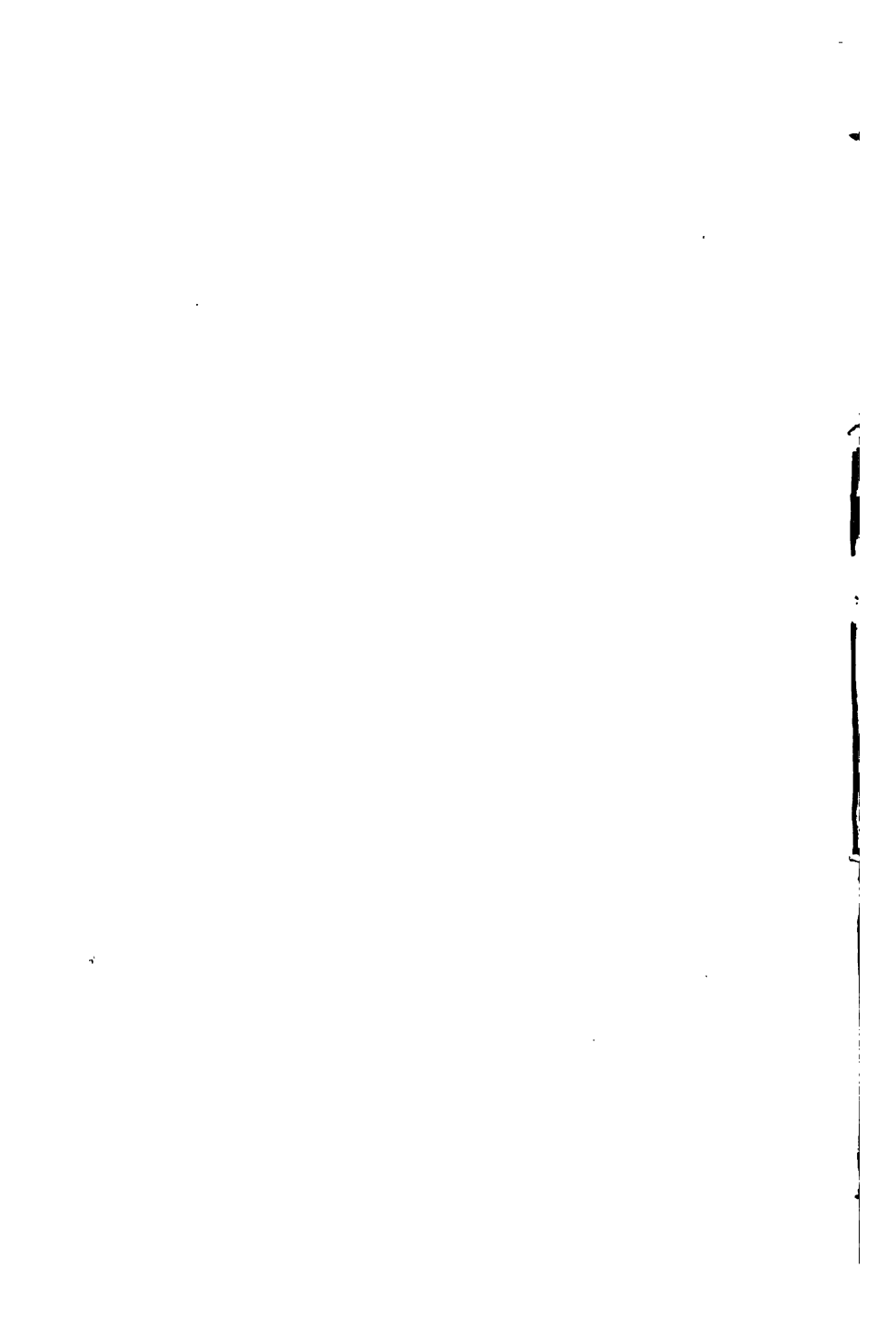
* [The imperial ordinances against Christianity were, nevertheless, not directed to the suppression of the spiritual doctrines peculiar to the new religion, but against the Christian theocratic pretensions and intolerance which were dangerous for the state and civil liberty, as the results have but too well proved. The policy of the Roman Government, so soon as it became alive to the true character of the Christian hierarchy, may be likened to that which in certain modern states has occasionally been pursued against the society of Jesus. But that those ordinances were generally enforced with leniency by the executive we have evidence in some of the Patristic apologies. "Of all the emperors," writes Tertullian about the end of the second century, "down to this present reign (Septimius Severus) show me one who, having understanding of religion or humanity, ever persecuted the Christians. On the contrary, we can show you the excellent Marcus Aurelius for our protector, who, though he could not openly set aside the penal laws, yet did all in his power to render them ineffectual in another way—namely, by discouraging our accusers with the heaviest punishments" (Apol. adv. Gent., 5). The truth is that the ordinances in question, like most modern enactments against Jesuits and Ultramontanism, generally remained a dead letter, or were defeated in their application by indirect influences. To so great an extent was this the case that they may truly be said not for a day to have arrested the formation of congregations, the building of churches, and the consecration of prelates, which went on openly in every province of Rome, the faith in Jesus providing the public with what they craved for—namely, a new series of superstitions.]

in general, tolerating other faiths and forms of worship, there would have been no need to guard against it. But the Jewish theocratic principle, which has not even now died out with the Dark Ages and the Papal despotism, aimed at subverting the whole structure of Roman society. It was equally incompatible with the preservation of the established State cultus and with that essential principle of civil government, namely, that the State cannot permit in its midst another organisation claiming from its members the fealty due by subjects.

As regards their instincts and organisation, the Christians of that age might well be likened to the termite ants of some tropical countries. The weak and half-crazy Emperors, with whose reigns the Julian line of rulers came to an end, did not perceive that the foundations of the august edifice of the Roman State were being sapped; the later princes of the Flavian line suspected the mischief; Trajan and his successors saw it clearly.

In fact, it was nothing less than the State principles, the national life, the very peace of Rome and civilisation itself, that the Christians threatened to subvert. None of the great Roman emperors of the second century were deceived on that head. If the Imperial Government had succeeded in stamping out Christianity, or any other Semitic or so-called monotheistic religion which might have come in its place, the empire would probably have been saved, the ennobling culture of the ancients would not have undergone the eclipse of the Dark Ages, and the Western world would not now be wasting its strength in combating the authority of Jewish superstitions and the pretensions of the vicars of Christ. The good Emperors of Rome, by their efforts to resist the spread of Christianity, helped to prolong the beneficent vitality of the Roman dominion for the period of a century, precisely because by so much they retarded the triumph of that religion.

THE END.



THE RELIGION OF ISRAEL.

A STUDY IN COMPARATIVE MYTHOLOGY.

BY

JULES SOURY.

Translated from the French, with the Author's permission,

BY

ANNIE BESANT

(2.)

P R E F A C E .

WE have striven to do for the Semitic that which has already been done for the Aryan mythology. In penning this essay on the Religion of Israel, no model stood before us. Until now works on this subject have been written either by theologians or by Freethinkers, too often ignorant of the methods of philology and comparative mythology as understood to-day.

Henceforth the originally fetishistic and polytheistic character of the Semitic religions may be regarded as a scientific fact. It can be demonstrated that all the Semitic races, the Hebrews as well as the Canaanites, Arameans, Assyrians, and Arabs, worshipped many gods. It is admitted that this is true of Israel both before and after Abraham, the mythical ancestor of the race. At the same time the prophetic literature of the eighth and seventh centuries, Deuteronomy, Job, etc., is a striking monument of Jewish monotheism.

What is the explanation of this historical phenomenon? The most probable explanation is that monotheism emerged from polytheism by the natural development of the religious ideas of the Hebrews. It is the doctrine of evolution applied to religion. But there is another explanation offered by those who believe that religious creeds, like animal and vegetable species, are created once for all, and that monotheism can never be evolved from polytheism. They are

compelled to allege a special creation, or to appeal to a divine revelation. Set in these terms, the problem is practically solved. All those who do not believe in the supernatural are instructed at the same time both as to the polytheistic character of Semitic religions in general, and as to the religious evolution which, during the course of centuries, has necessarily transformed the Hebraic idea of god.

Semitic mythology, less rich than the Aryan, is one of those studies of wide-reaching influence without which it is impossible to understand the historical development of the western nations. The ancient peoples of Asia have not only bestowed on us existing religions. The Greeks, from whom we receive our civilisation, did not they owe their own to Phœnicia, to Assyria, and to Egypt? If to us there seems a vast gulf between the monuments of Asiatic and the grand idealism of Hellenic art, if an empirical science devoid of generalisations cannot be compared with the scientific conceptions of the world put forth by a Democritus or by an Aristotle, if astronomical tables and medical recipes are very far removed from the "Treatise on the Heavens," from the "Physics," from the "History of Animals," yet all these monuments of Greek genius, and all the later progress of western civilisation, presuppose a slow and laborious initiation, during which the Greeks must have learned to read, write, calculate, measure, and make astronomical observations. Egypt and Chaldea preceded Greece by many thousands of years. It is ever to these ancient Eastern civilisations that we must remount, for in order to understand what is we must know what has been.

In the following volume, as in others already published, system is not less important in our eyes than scientific facts and theories. We have nowhere developed it (this was not the place) but it inspires every page.

Others have always had a philosophy ; we have as yet only a method. They bring into the world, with a copy of the moral law, a complete edition of the works of Plato or of Comte. Nature has favored us less highly, and we should be very puzzled to say to what school we belong. Those who are versed in the history of philosophy know how much of error and of truth is contained in systems the most diverse. Each has been necessary, and therefore legitimate and true, in its own time. But, fashioned in our image, they have limits, like conscience, which is such only because it is finite, resistant ; it strikes ceaselessly against an unknown reality, as a fish against the walls of an aquarium. Man, no more able to comprehend matter than spirit, must leave on one side, like ancient armor no longer suitable to his size, the sublime speculations of idealism and materialism.

It is a mistake to fancy that the contest of these twin foes can only result like that of Eteocles and Polynices.

Par l'excès de leur haine ils semblaient réunis,
Et, prêts à s'égorger, ils paraissaient amis.

They cannot shed each other's blood, for they are invulnerable. The idealist, without inconsistency, can admit the existence of matter ; the modern materialist readily confesses that the substance of things escapes his grasp, that he only cognises phæ-

nomena, subjective images, ideas ; in a word, empty shadows. To trace back in mind all knowledge to perception, and in nature all force to motion, such is the final term to which we can apparently attain. But it is obvious that a perception is nothing save a transformed sensation, and that motion is but a condition of matter.

I would add that, on these serene heights, the practical tendencies of the contradictory doctrines are reconciled in a sublime harmony. The greatest materialistic poet that the world has ever seen, Lucretius, preached the morality of an ascetic, exhorted men to self-denial, and demonstrated the universal vanity of all things. These moral views on nature and on man were not born of the fancy of a melancholy thinker ; they were merely the reflexion of the physical and physiological theories of a system which is erroneously conceived as favorable to the tastes and the appetites of the crowd. The path which leads to the supreme peace, *placidam pacem*, is rough and difficult as the way of the cross.

J. S.

November 1st, 1876.

THE RELIGION OF ISRAEL.

A STUDY IN COMPARATIVE MYTHOLOGY.

CHAPTER I.

IF, as taught Heraclitus of Ephesus, all things eternally change and are transformed, historical sciences must also share in the effects of the universal flux and reflux, and the truth of yesterday may become the error of to-morrow. It is especially in those sciences of which the subject is little accessible to our means of investigation, that are found these kinds of contradiction and of perpetual oscillation. Comparative mythology is one of those difficult studies wherein progress is only made by delicate approximations. The divine forms evoked by the sage crowd together, move, float vaguely as in a dim twilight, and then vanish and are again lost in the abyss of time. Where is the Faust able to recall into the light and to give back to life these gracious or terrible shades? For this task are needed not only great penetration, wide sympathy, and exquisite sensitiveness to the most transient gradations; a sort of divination, or of elevated intuition, is necessary. A learned man, however eminent, unites but very rarely these high qualities. But what does it matter? One generation shall realise the ideal another has conceived. Our gratitude is none the less due to the learned who shall guide us in this study. Others may arise, perchance more powerful, but not more sincere nor more disinterested than these rare minds.

It is in the religious system of Babylonia and Assyria, as we know it through the cuneiform inscriptions, and through the monuments of the empires of the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates, that we must seek the origin of the religions of Syria, Phœnicia

and Palestine. The primitive religion of the nations of the Semitic race was Polytheism. Like the ancient dwellers in the valley of the Nile, like the ancestors of our race, the Aryans on the banks of the Oxus, like all the human families of the new and old worlds, the Semitic tribes which, in the furthest antiquity, issued from Arabia and spread over the countries comprised between Armenia, the Persian Gulf, and the Red Sea—the Arameans, Assyrians, Canaanites, Phœnicians, Hebrews—at first worshipped the sun, the moon, and the planets, the light and the fire, the vast expanse of the starry skies, the mountains, those giants born of the earth our mother, the rivers, the forests, the animals. While the Aryans of the “land of the seven rivers,” where were composed the most ancient Vedic hymns, were continually stirred to emotion by the gigantic spectacle of atmospheric revolutions, by the combats of Indra with the dragon who kept imprisoned the beneficent rain of heaven, and by the thousand variations of light and shade playing among the clouds, kindled by the fires of the dawn and of the sun-setting; the Semitic races, from Aleppo to the Arabian Sea, from Egypt to the Persian Gulf, scarce knew aught save a sky almost ever burning and cloudless, the mournful solitudes of the vast plains of the desert sands, and the matchless splendor of nights wherein the moon seemed to rule, as a queen, over all the hosts of heaven.

Hence the relative poverty of the Semitic mythology. There are certainly not only arid deserts in this district of Asia. Without mentioning the central plateau of Arabia, along the borders of the Euphrates and in certain parts of Syria the soil is fertile, well-watered by the winter rains, and yields abundant harvests. At the foot of Lebanon there are delightful valleys, where the orange-tree, the date, and the banana are covered with blossom and fruit. In autumn and in spring Syria is a paradise; but it often suffers from aridity and want of water. When we remember the Indus and the Ganges, what are the Orontes, the Jordan, and the River Adonis? Brooks, beds of pebbles, which we can pass over dryshod during three-quarters of the year.

Like soil, like race. In these stony and sandy plains man will be small, thin, dried up, so sober that his head is as empty as his stomach. The type of the race, the Bedouin, the nomad Arab, never thinks, and knows nothing ; his imagination is as barren as the desert. A swift horse, a long straight lance, a fine camel, a beautiful woman ; such are the everlasting themes of his poems. His sensations, always the same, create only sentiments and ideas of monotonous simplicity. Simple is the language, simple the grammar. The declensions, the conjugations, all the grammatical forms are equally poor. There are no abstract terms to express general ideas. But do children have general ideas ? And in fact, these naïve discourses, wherein the propositions are linked together and follow each other without any further tie than the conjunction *and*, are in the language of children. Most surely such beings, whether nomadic or settled, would never become very great artists ; still less would they be philosophers or sages. Aristotle, Hippocrates, Ptolemy, all the science of Greece might flow over these shrivelled brains without leaving more traces thereupon than the rains of winter in the beds of their torrents.

But although not artist, nor philosopher, nor sage, one is none the less a man. It is impossible to live in close relations with nature without experiencing a thousand different emotions, more or less lively, without feeling penetrated with terror or admiration, without magnifying the destructive or the conserving forces of the universe. Amid all these forces, the mightiest is, without contradiction, the sun, the fire of heaven, father of earthly fire, unique and supreme cause of motion and life on our planet. There is no need of reason to understand that the very life, and as it were the blood of our celestial father flows in the veins of the earth, our mother. In the time of love, when the luminous heaven embraces and penetrates her, from her fertilised womb springs forth a world. It is she who quivers on the plains where the soft moist air waves gently on the grasses ; it is she who climbs in the bush, who soars in the oak, who fills the solitude with the joyous twitter of birds beneath the

cloudlet, or from the leaf-lined nests ; it is she who in seas and in running waters, on mountains and in woods, couples the gorgeous male with the ardent female, throbs in every bosom, loves in every life. But all this terrestrial life, all this warmth and this light are but effluents from the sun. "We are," says Tyndall, "no longer in a poetical but in a purely mechanical sense, the children of the sun." That which science proves to-day the reason of primitive man had grasped by instinct.

Far, far away in the past, ere metaphysics existed, men adored fire and rendered homage to the sun. At the root of Semitic, as at the root of Indo-European religions, the principal myths are of solar origin. Before trying to guess, men contemplated, described, chanted of the universe in hymns and in cosmogonies, of which some fragments have come down to us. The sun, the moon, the planets and the fixed stars, the mountains, the rivers, and all vegetable life, the storm, the wind, the thunder, the fire, all the forces of nature, were deified, worshipped, above all dreaded, and were to man, as still to some inferior races, beings endowed with life, feeling and intelligence. Moreover, that which is born, which develops, which arrives at maturity only to decrease and die (as the earth and its products), was regarded as dependent upon that which exists eternally, without change, without age, like the sky and the stars. In nature, then, was seen a cause active and a cause passive, and the deity, by human analogy, was conceived as male and female. Thus among the Semitic races were Baal and Baalath, the active force which creates, conserves and destroys, the passive force which conceives, engenders and brings to birth. The symbol of the creative power in nature was universally represented in the sanctuaries and on religious monuments. The fundamental unity of the two kinds of divinity often caused the transference of the attributes of the male deity to the female and *vice versa*, hence the hermaphrodite or androgynous deities of Syria and Phœnicia. Sometimes even, as in the temple of Hierapolis in Syria, a third figure symbolised the unity of the twain.

CHAPTER II.

ETHNOLOGICAL questions, important as they are in the political history of nations, are assuredly even yet more decisive in the history of religions. The race, especially as to its origin, is an irreducible fact which dominates the whole future evolution of the nations. The history of the religious origins of mankind is, therefore, indissolubly intertwined with the history of ethnological origins. Myths, sacred legends, are but the blossoms of an immense tree whose roots strike into inaccessible regions. To understand the flower we must know the tree, and, therefore, the nature of the soil, of the climate, of the atmosphere whence it draws its sap, the very principles of its life. The instrument of investigation which at present seems the most useful (there is none perfect) is the linguistic—philology and comparative mythology.

Some valuable works have been lately issued on the origin and the primitive home of the Semitic peoples. In an important memoir on the cradle and the migrations of the Semitic races, M. Schrader has established* that, contrary to received belief, the fatherland of the Semitic races was not Armenia, but central and northern Arabia; that the various families of the Semitic stock formed two groups, clearly distinguished from each other by language and by religious ideas (the group of the southern Semites, Arabs, Himyarites, Ethiopians; the group of northern Semites, Babylonians, or Chaldeans, Assyrians, Arameans, Canaanites, Hebrews); that these latter races issued from Arabia in several

* "Die Abstammung der Chaldæer und die Ursitze der Semiten," in the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, xxvii., 397-424; "Semitismus und Babylonismus, zur Frage nach dem Ursprunge des Hebraismus," by the same author, in the *Jahrbücher für Protestantische Theologie*. I. Jahrgang (1875), p. 117, et seq.

migrations, and had doubtless sojourned for many generations in Babylonia, already inhabited and civilised by another people, before continuing their march to the north and west, into the countries of western Asia known as Assyria, Aramea, Phœnicia, and Palestine.

Although distinct among themselves, the Semitic tongues of the northern group constitute a unity as against those of Arabia and Ethiopia. The religious ideas of these two groups afford a second distinguishing mark; those of the Semites of the north, closely interrelated, differ from those of the Semites of the south, especially from those of the Arabs of central and northern Arabia. It is the same with the cycle of sacred legends. Thus there are no traces among the Arabs of the legend of the deluge, current among the Babylonians, Hebrews, and Arameans.

The great ethnical movements, the migrations of the Semitic peoples, are attested by numerous witnesses. The classical writers are aware that the Phœnicians or Canaanites came from the east, from the borders of the Red Sea. The Bible mentions the migrations of the Hebrews in Mesopotamia, to Haran, and from Mesopotamia to the valley of the Jordan. That the Assyrians, when they settled at Asour (Kileh-Shergat), and later at Nineveh, came from Babylonia, is stated in Genesis (chaps. x., xi.), and in indigenous monuments.* The Ethiopians did not always inhabit Abyssinia; they only passed from the Arabian peninsula into Africa by the straits of Babel-Mandeb at a comparatively late period. As to the Canaanites, the Hebrews, the Assyrians, their migrations were from east to west, and from south to north, since they came from Babylonia. This view is in accordance with the tradition of the compiler of Genesis (chaps. x., xxiv.), according to which the Hebrews issued from Arphaxad, that is to say, from the province of Arrhapachitis, to the north of Assyria, towards the Gordyan mountains, the country now inhabited by the Kurds.

Abraham, the mythical ancestor of Israel, came

* Schrader, "Die Keilinschriften und das alte Testament," pp. 17—20 and 384.

from Ur Kasdim, the "Our" of the Chaldees, a town of Babylonia, now marked by the ruins of Mugheir, on the right bank of the Euphrates, to the south of Babylon. The emigrants travelled towards the north, to Arphaxad, on the borders of Armenia, and then came to Haran, in northern Mesopotamia, before entering the valley of the Jordan. They came into contact beyond the river, on the coasts of the Mediterranean, with the Canaanites, a people of the same language and the same blood—whatever the tenth chapter of Genesis may say, which is besides purely geographical not ethnographical*—who had also come from Babylonia, and had followed a similar road to the north and west. Other tribes, brethren of the Israelites, like them descendants of Terah, the Moabites, the Edomites, etc., also occupied this country. The Arameans and Assyrians were, in their turn, established to the north of Babylonia.

M. Schrader very reasonably lays stress on this prolonged sojourn, on this lengthy settlement, made by all these nations in the valley of the lower Euphrates, among a people of another race, another religion, and possessing an already old and refined civilisation. This race, this religion, this civilisation were not Semitic; they were Accadian. The latter name is now recognised by science in England, Germany, and France. M. Oppert, it should be remembered, has repeatedly argued that those we call Accadians should be termed Sumerian. However this may be, the Assyrians designated as the "language of the Sumerians and Accadians" the non-Semitic tongue of the grammar; or, more briefly, they termed it the "language of Accad." Whatever may have been the name of the non-Semitic population which lived in Babylonia before the arrival of the Semites, that they formed a distinct nation, and that the language spoken by them was a distinct language, are facts now established by the researches of Hinks, Norris, Oppert, Saulcy, Grivel, Sayce, and Lenormant.†

* B. Stade, in the *Morgenländischen Forschungen* (1875), pp. 230, et seq.

† La langue primitive de la Chaldée et les idiomes touraniens, étude de philologie et d'histoire, suivie d'un glossaire Accadien. Paris, Maisonneuve, 1875.

Briefly: the Accadians were a nation; they were not of Semitic origin; they spoke a tongue on the linguistic classification of which it is well to speak doubtfully until the lexicon is complete, but which in any case, by its agglutinative character, by that which is known of its vocabulary, is related to the Ugro-Finnic and Turkic idioms.*

To prove that the influence early exercised by this people over the Semites of Babylonia was very great, it is enough to show how widely the material civilisation, the arts, and the religion of the Semites of the northern group differ from those of the southern, who were sheltered by their isolation from undergoing the influence of the aborigines of Babylonia.

First of all, the sexagesimal numeral system, with the whole system of weights and measures of early Asia in general, and of the Hebrews in particular, is, we know, of Babylonian and not of Semitic origin, for the Arabs are ignorant of the sexagesimal notation. The division of the year into twelve months, of the month into four weeks, of the week into seven days, together with their present names, are doubtless of Babylonian origin. The same must be said of the sacred character attributed to the number 7, of the astronomical observations and calculations with their applications to astrology. In arts as in science, the Semites of Babylonia, little original or plastic, were for a long period the servile disciples of the primitive Accadian population. Even that which is called Assyrian art has only modified the details of ancient models; the type has always been preserved.

This Accadian influence has been shown by M. Schrader to extend even over the language and the literature of the Semites. Thus, in all the histories of Semitic literature we read that the essential characteristic of Semitic poesy is the "parallelism of phrases" and a particular construction termed a "strophe." It would be very strange, if this were peculiarly Semitic, that it should not be found in the poetry of the Arabs, that is the purest of the

* "Turco-tartaric, or Uralo-Altaic," says M. Schrader.

Semitic races. But in the minor Accadian poems, many of them interlined with an Assyrian translation, which may be read on the bricks preserved in the British Museum, we can see that the Accadians arranged their lyric poems in parallel verses and in strophes,* just as did later the writers of the Hebrew psalms. We also meet, in the poetry of Accad, the poetical figures, the ideas and turns of expression which we are in the habit of considering purely biblical. Remember the figure of the great floods to which the poets of Israel oftentimes compare the dangers surrounding them, and the familiar phrase, "O Iahveh, who is like unto thee?" The Hebrew prophets speak of their national deity in exactly the same terms as are used by the Babylonian and Assyrian worshippers of Sin or of Adar. Even to the very sense of sin and of penitence, unknown to the ancient Arabs but so profound in the Israelite, and the naïve conviction that good comes to the righteous and evil to the wicked in this world—there is nothing which is not found in a didactic psalm of Babylonia.

It is well known that Mr. George Smith, the Assyriologist of the British Museum, has discovered several episodes belonging to a regular epic poem in the Assyrian tongue, although no poem of this kind exists among the other families of the Semitic race. Can we suppose that, after their conversion to monotheism, the Arabs, Arameans, and Israelites lost their ancient Pagan literature, containing some epics? M. Schrader does not think so, and he points out that pre-Islamitic literature offers no example of this kind. If the Assyrians and the Semitic Babylonians had an epic poem, it is because they lived in the midst of a people of another race who possessed a very rich and much-varied mythology. The epic can only appear where there exists a highly-developed mythology. The Semitic mythology, properly speaking, however full of gods and goddesses, of angels and demons, never rose to that exuberance

* Schrader, *Die Höllenfahrt der Istar, nebst Proben assyrischer Lyrik* (Giessen, T. Ricker) p. 69 *et seq.* G. in *Les Premières Civilisations, de Fr. Lenormant, un Vêda chaldéen.*

of divine imagery, that marvellous wealth of religious imagination, possessed by certain human families, who peopled earth and heaven with gracious or terrible forms. Arid and dry as the desert, Semitic imagination only created vague divine abstractions. If, then, the Assyrians, we repeat, and the Assyrians only, possess an epic, it is in their intimate and prolonged commerce with the ancient Babylonian mythology that we must seek for the reason.

The two important episodes of this epic hitherto discovered, "The Deluge," and "The Descent of Istar into hell," yield the best commentary on the biblical stories of the deluge and hell (*scheól*). We have henceforth the epigraphic proof,* confirming the valuable testimony of Berosus, that these legends—like those of the creation, of the tower of Babel, etc.—did not originate in Palestine, but were carried thither by the Hebrews with the civilisation and worship of the people of the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates, amid whom they had sojourned for centuries. In the episode of the Descent of Istar into the dark places, hell is, as with Job, the country whence is no return (Job xvi., 22); it is a place of darkness and nothingness (Job x., 21, etc., xvii., 13, etc., cf Psalms xxviii., 1, xlix., 15, etc.), conceptions all foreign to the pure Semites or Arabs. The Babylonian deluge is also a chastisement from the deity; it is the consequence of man's corruption (Assyrian poem, line 22). The details of the building of the Babylonian ark (line 24), into which are introduced the various pairs of male and female animals (line 80), of the shutting of the doors of the ark (line 89), of the duration, increase and decrease of the flood (lines 123—139), of the sending out of a dove, a swallow and a raven (lines 140, 142, 144), etc., leave no doubt as to the origin of the legend of Genesis, a legend absolutely unknown to the Arabs.

* G. Smith, "The Chaldean Account of Genesis, containing the Description of the Creation, the Fall of Man, the Deluge, the Tower of Babel, the times of the Patriarchs and Nimrod; Babylonian Fables and Legends of the Gods; from the Cuneiform Inscriptions." London: S. Low, 1876, in 8vo. The German translation of this book, published by M. Frederick Delitzsch, may be consulted with advantage.

We know the part played in Genesis (ii., iii.) by the tree of life. On the Assyrian monuments a sacred tree, a cypress, is often found; priests, with a cone in their hands, stand beside the tree, paying worship according to their creed. The nature of the tree, one of those with evergreen foliage, the symbol of immortality, sufficiently explains that we have here the tree of life. As a still further proof, we may see on the earthenware coffins discovered at Warkah (and now preserved in the British Museum) the same tree and the same priests, funereal symbol of immortality. There is no doubt that these coffins are relatively modern, belonging perhaps to the time of the Seleucides, but at that period it was naturally the most archaic types that were imitated.*

* Without insisting on the forms of phallic worship, so spread throughout ancient Asia, it is needful to point out, with M. Schrader, that the most ancient Babylonian inscriptions in the Accadian tongue, those of Uruk and of Ur Kasdim, preserved in the British Museum, were engraved on clay phalli. We have here the origin of the usages and customs of religion so long followed among the Canaanites and Hebrews (V. Movers, *Die Phœnizer*, I., 591 *et passim*).

CHAPTER III.

ALMOST the whole of the Pantheon of the Semites of the North and West appears to be of Babylonian origin. The purely Semitic gods of the Arabs—when not borrowed from Babylonia, as in the case of Sin and of Athtar of the Himyarites—form an entirely distinct group. The fair order of the Assyrio-Babylonian Pantheon is partially lost in passing among the Aramean and Canaanite Semites. Theological syncretism began early in the valleys of the Orontes and the Jordan. In any case, if we desire to know the chief deities of ancient Asia, we must go back to the twelve great gods of Babylonia and Assyria, to the supreme god, El (Ilou) or Assour (in Assyria) to the three cosmic deities, Anou, Bel and Ao (I-a) to the three sidereal deities, Sin (the moon), Samas (the sun), and Bin (the atmosphere), and to the seven planetary deities, Mardouk (Jupiter), Istar (Venus), Adar (Saturn), Nergal (Mars), and Nebo (Mercury).

But was this Assyrio-Babylonian Pantheon really Semitic? To which division of the population of the country, the Accadian or the Semitic, ought we to attribute the chief religious creations? With very few exceptions, says M. Schrader, all these gods were already in the Accadian Pantheon, and had belonged to the ancient non-Semitic inhabitants of Babylonia. "The names of gods among the Babylonians and the Semitic Assyrians," writes the learned author, "are to a great extent taken from the Accadian." This is the case, for instance, with Mardouk, Ao (Ia), Sakkout, Tam-mouz (Dûzi), and perhaps with Istar and Nergal. Anou, the Oannes of Berosus and the Anos of Damascius is, beyond all doubt, the Accadian *an*, "god" in a Semitic dress. By the fact that the deity was designated among these nations by an eight-rayed star—a symbol which

passed later into the Assyrian creed—we see that the ancient Babylonian non-Semitic religion was originally a form of sun-worship. The adoration of the elementary spirits also played a great part therein. The pomp and splendor of worship, the learned hierarchy of the priesthood, the splendid architecture of the temples, the music, chants, etc., were all foreign to the religion of the ancient Arabs. In a word, the Semitism of primitive times was profoundly transformed by Babylonianism.

We can now form an idea of the degree of culture at which the Hebrews had arrived, when, following the other Terahites, they penetrated into Canaan. The inhabitants of this country were Semites as much as were the tribes which came from "the other side" of the Euphrates. The close relationship between the Canaanites and these nomads is proved by the identity of language and of creed. We never find in the Bible that these new arrivals had any difficulty in making themselves understood by the original inhabitants, and all the proper names of towns or persons of this nation which have come down to us are purely Semitic. It is further proved that the Canaanitish element is dominant in the Scripture Hebrew; does not Isaiah himself speak of Hebrew as the "language of Canaan" (Isaiah xviii., 19)? The fundamental unity of the tongues of the Canaanites and the Hebrews is to-day a matter of demonstration. These two Semitic idioms are derived from one and the same more ancient language, belonging to the group of northern Semites; both the Phœnician and the Hebrew are branches of the old Canaanitish trunk. All the tribes whom the Greeks named Phœnicians, the Ammonites, Hittites, and Hivites, had then attained a tolerably advanced stage of civilisation. Centuries earlier they had either destroyed or absorbed the aboriginal races, the Nephilim, the Zomzommin, the Rephaim, races gigantic and monstrous, recalling the Anasikas and the Rakshasas, against whom the Aryans struggled in Hindustan. Caravans of merchants, going down to Egypt to sell terebinth balm, myrrh, aromatics, etc., traversed the country. The money current among the merchants was stamped coin. We read in Genesis

of vessels and of ports. In some towns, as in Sodom and Gomorrah, which seem to have impressed the naïf Bedouins as did Babylon, we remark certain refinements unsuited to barbarians. The Canaanites had long since outgrown the gross fetichism which we find still existing in the family of Abram. Rachel steals her father's idols. "Wherefore hast thou stolen my gods?" says Laban to Jacob. Rachel, having hidden them under the camel's furniture, sat upon them, and when her father penetrated into the tent, she feigned a certain indisposition, so as to avoid rising. In another passage in Genesis, Jacob buries under an oak near Shechem the idols, talismans, and amulets of his household. On several occasions the Bible represents the Abrahamites as idolators and polytheists (Gen. xxxi., 53; xxxv., 2). In the book of Joshua, Terah, the father of Abram, is spoken of as a pagan and a polytheist, as are also their fathers, who "dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time," that is to say, of the Euphrates.

Even when the Bible does not expressly say so, we find in almost every page of the ancient books of Israel and of the prophets of the eighth century, incidents which bear witness to the idolatry and polytheistic nature-worship of the Hebrews.

It might well be laid down, as a self-evident truth, that fundamental differences of religious conceptions could not exist in the families of a race inhabiting the same country, speaking the same language, and, by their own confession, descended genealogically from each other. The polytheism of the Babylonians, the Assyrians, the Arameans, the Syrians, the Phœnicians, and the pre-islamitic Arabs is an incontestable fact. Not less incontestable is the polytheism of the Terahites, that is, of the nations which, like the Israelities, descended from Terah, the Edomites, Ammonites, Moabites, and Ishmaelites. All these tribes, issuing from Babylonia and Assyria, worshipped fire and the heavenly bodies; they found the worship of the same gods existing in Palestine. Even the names of some of the divinities were identical, proving their original relationship: *Nomina numina*, says the axiom which in

the school of M. Kuhn has become the key of comparative mythology.

Genesis relates that Abram, the mythic ancestor of the Hebrews, met in Canaan Melchizedek, king of Salem, the priest or *cohen* of El-Elion (Genesis xiv., 18). This god, El, who probably remained the national god of the Beni-Israel until their exodus from Egypt, as their name, indeed, seems to imply, and who almost always has some attribute attached to his name, as El-Elion, El Schaddai, El-Kanna, El-Hai—this god El seems to have been generally worshipped among all the families of the Semitic race. El, or Ilou, is the Semitic god whose character has been most obscured by time, just because he is the most ancient. Before becoming the god of the Hebrew patriarchs, he had been the supreme god of Babylonia. It is impossible, in the present state of science, to determine with exactitude his primordial signification, although it was apparently sidereal. That which is certain is that the name of El—which became a divine title, like that of Bel, Malik, etc., as Ilou is, in Assyrian, the name of all the gods—belonged at first to a perfectly distinct and individual god, as we see in the inscription of Hammourabi, a very ancient Babylonian king, in which, 2,000 years before our era, Ilou and Bel figure together. "We see," says M. Schrader on this point, "how ancient was the worship of Il in Babylon."* In relatively modern periods the Semitic inscriptions prove that the god Il or El ought not to be confused with the title "god." The epigraphic texts discovered in central Syria, El has as consort a goddess Elath, Ilath, or Allath, just as Baal has his Baalath.† Allath, the spouse of El, must likewise be distinguished from the mere title "goddess." In Sanchoniathon,‡ the companions of El, inferior gods who surround him and execute his orders, are called from his name *Elohim*: these *dii minores*, with whom Iahveh (Genesis iii., 22) converses familiarly, like a king in the midst of his court

* *Die Keilinschriften*, p. 42.

† M. de Vogüé, *Syrie centrale*, p. 101, *et passim*.

‡ *Fragm. II.*, § 18.

(Job i. 6, ii., etc.), and who later were turned into angels, appear also in the fragments of Berosus of the Babylonian story of the creation. In the Greek and Latin inscriptions in Syria, lately published by M. Waddington, we find mention made of the monuments of the worship of Kronos,* as the Greeks named El. As to his universality, El is in the Semitic Pantheon that which Djaus is in the Indo-European. The idea of god is rendered in Assyrian by the word Ilou, and the ideographic symbols of this notion had originally the form of a star.† It was the highest divinity of the Babylonians, as is shown by the name of the great city of which El was the guardian deity, Bab-El, or Bab-Ilou (the gate of El). In Assyria he bore the exclusively national name of Assour. The inscriptions entitle him "king or chief of the gods, supreme lord, father of the gods." Some rare monuments, all belonging to Assyria, give a spouse to Ilou or Assour, the duplicate of himself and his passive form.‡ Whether this god originally signified the starry heaven or the light, it is certain that a sidereal signification has always attached to him. According to Sanchoniathon, Kronos was called El among the Phœnicians.

Thus the supreme god of the Beni-Israel, if not already Iahveh, was also a supreme god of the Canaanites. We also see the Terahites accepting as sacred certain spots venerated by the inhabitants of the country, certain trees, mountains, wells and beth-el, or "houses of El." These primitive sanctuaries were large blocks of stone, erected in all kinds of places, especially on hill-tops, as memorial of some important event. These stones were consecrated by pouring on them oil, coarse wine, or blood from a

* W. H. Waddington. *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie expliquées et recueillies*. Paris, 1870.

† Oppert, *Expédition en Mésopotamie*, II., 109. (Cf Diod. Sic., II., 30.) The symbol of the eight-rayed star, representing the eight celestial regions, first signified heaven, and later god. The meaning is year. The primitive hieroglyphic, from which this was derived, was the image of a star. God and heaven are expressed by the simple word star (kakkab) by the triple sign. (Oppert.)

‡ François Lenormant, *Essai de commentaire sur les Fragments cosmogoniques de Bérosee*, p. 60, et seq.

sacrifice. Later, the origin of these megalithic monuments was connected with the legends of the patriarchs, and altars and temples were raised on their sites. These are the "bāmôth," or "high places," so often spoken of in the Bible, and mentioned also on the tablet of Mescha, where sacrifices continued to be offered long after the centralisation of worship at Jerusalem.

All these nomadic tribes, swooping down with their flocks upon the land of Canaan, were a veritable scourge to the inhabitants. Like the Bedouins of our own day they did not live in towns; they pitched their tents in the country, devouring to the last blade of grass and pillaging the land. More than one city suffered the fate of Shechem, where they murdered the men, plundered the houses, and carried off the women and the flocks (Genesis, xxxiv). The soil of Palestine was unable to feed all these hordes, for we find the last arrivals, the Beni-Israel, going down several times into Egypt, to escape famine. In similar fashion ten or twelve thousand Arabs belonging to the provinces of Bengazi and Tripoli, driven by hunger, lately left their own country and traversed the desert to reach Egypt.

From the time of the thirteenth dynasty the Semitic tribes of the North had begun to invade Lower Egypt, where Asiatic populations, from far antiquity, had encamped and had even inhabited some quarters of the towns of the eastern Delta. Nomads like Abraham and the sons of Jacob, whose whole wealth was in flocks and herds, could only appear to the Egyptians to be cheiks of nomadic Semites, Hyk-sôs or Hak-dasu, like the other hordes from Arabia, Syria and Canaan. There is, indeed, now no doubt as to the relationship between the Hyk-sôs and the Terahites. Under the eighteenth dynasty the original masters of the country gradually regained the upper hand, and the shepherds were compelled to abandon Avaris and to leave Egypt. The Hebrews remained. They were established to the north-east, in the land of Goschen, a country on the road to Canaan. Situated between the Nile and the Red Sea, this land was so rich in

pasturage that it was called the "best part of the country." The Semites, terribly prolific, so grew and multiplied therein that the Pharaohs of the time, according to scripture, who were naturally ignorant of the very name of Joseph, could not see without disquietude the prosperity of those shepherds. The Egyptians, who held shepherds "in abomination,"* and who would even, according to Manetho, have chased them forth as unclean,† oppressed them and overwhelmed them with burdens and forced labor. This is the only certain fact. The Israelites, put on a level with slaves and prisoners of war, were condemned like these to the public works. Leaving on one side the pictures on many Egyptian tombs, in which we see Semites making bricks and raising walls under the eyes of overseers armed with long whips, an Egyptian tablet and the papyri of Leyden mention the *Aperiou*, or Hebrews, among the races employed on the public works.‡ No human being was less fitted for this kind of labor than a child of Israel. The Hebrews took advantage of a period of anarchy and foreign invasion to leave Egypt, during the interval which separates Seti II. from Ramses III., that is to say, in the last years of the nineteenth dynasty or in the early years of the twentieth. The history of Manetho, confirmed by the great Harris papyrus, no longer permits us to place the Exodus under the reign of Menephtah. The chief of the emigrants bore an Egyptian name, Osarsyph, or rather Osarsouph; "Osiris is behind him and protects him;" and, according to all the historians, he was "learned in the wisdom of the Egyptians." Manetho, who agrees

* Genesis xlvii., 34. This aversion has been much exaggerated. Without speaking of the linguistic and religious affinities which lead us to regard the Egyptians as the proto-Semites, we find everywhere, in Egypt, Syria, Phœnicia, among the Hebrews, traces of profound reciprocal influence.

† This epithet should not be regarded as anything more than one of those terms of contempt so liberally bestowed by the Egyptians on their enemies. It does not imply that the Hebrews, or the people spoken of by Manetho, were really afflicted with leprosy.

‡ Cf, however, Maspero, "Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres." "Comptes rendus," I. 4th série (1874), p. 117, and on the time of the Exodus, p. 36 et seq.

with the Bible in designating Moses as the political and religious head of the Beni-Israel, makes the future legislator of the Hebrews a priest of Heliopolis. We do not, and probably never shall, know anything more about Moses. At least five or six centuries separate the time of Moses from that in which were edited the most ancient documents relating to him. The grand and living figure which we admire in Exodus and in Numbers has no historical likeness. We cannot prove that a single law of the Decalogue goes back to Moses; on the contrary, we can prove that the greater number of the laws have not this origin, especially with the additions which accompany the two slightly differing versions of Exodus and Deuteronomy.

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN the Beni-Israel returned to the land of Canaan they were idolators and polytheists just as when they quitted it.* Their chief divinity was no longer El, but Iahveh, whom the people worshipped under the form of a golden bull. There is no phenomenon more common in the history of religions than this appearance of new gods, dethroning the old. Thus, among the Hindus and among the Hellenes, Varuna paled before Indra, Uranus before Zeus. However, if the elder deities no longer govern, they reign always. The god El, whose name we meet everywhere in the Bible, especially in the poetical books, no more disappears before Iahveh than before the other gods or Elohim of the Semitic Pantheon; but he is no longer the national god, the tutelary deity of the confederated Israelite tribes. Iahveh is thenceforth the god of Israel, as Kemosh was the god of the Moabites, as Milcom or Molech of the Ammonites, as Orotal (light or fire of El) of the Edomites and Ishmaelites.

We are struck with the singularly gloomy and terrific character of these deities. All these gods are gods of fire, who feed on fat and on blood, who devour human victims. We must not forget that these shepherd tribes were still barbarians. Many centuries after the time with which we are dealing, we perceive in Hebrew legislation the repression of monstrous habits and depraved tastes which are only found among the very lowest savages. They are forbidden to tattoo themselves, to eat insects, reptiles, etc. The gods of the Terahites were naturally as savage and as blood-thirsty as their worshippers. They long preserved the sinister and sensual characteristics which dis-

* Numb. xxv., 2, 8; Josh. xxiv., 14; Amos xv., 25, 26; Ps. xcvi., 10; cvi.; Eze. xx., 7, 8, 16—18.

tinguished them from the Syrian deities. It is not, I repeat, that these various Semitic families worshipped gods which were essentially different. Outside the local worships, found among all nations, they had merely the Assyrio-Babylonian Pantheon, in other words, the sun, moon and stars, the earth and the phenomena of the atmosphere, considered in turn as the causes of production and destruction in the earth ; but while one class worshipped with joy and feasting the god of life and light, Baal and his Baalath, king and queen of heaven, the others were more wont to propitiate with bloody sacrifices and ceremonies of frantic cruelty the implacable wrath of the blazing star, of Moloch the insatiable, who yearly devours his children. Let the god be named El, Bel, Baal, Adonis or Tammouz, Rimmon, Moloch, Iahveh, Kemosh, Milcom, etc., it is ever the sun, the stars, or the atmospheric phenomena with which we are concerned. In the same way, let the goddess be called Baalath, Derketo, Aschera or Astarte, it is ever the deity, terrestrial or celestial, of the earth, of the moon or of the stars which is adored.

Let us add that the sun and moon are often replaced by planets. Baal and Moloch are, as is well known, the two male divinities regarded as supreme throughout the greater part of Phœnicia and Syria. M. Schrader affirms that the solar god Baal is the Assyrian god Samas, the sun, and that Moloch, the other solar deity, is the Assyrian god Malik. He refuses to assimilate Baal to Bel (Bil), the Babylonian god of the second triad, the revealing God, the demiourgos. We ought to add that M. de Baudissin is of another opinion. He points out, first, that Samas, the god of the second triad, represents the sun itself in its daily course. The Hebrews who adored Baal did not cease to render worship to the sun itself (2 Kings xxiii., 5 and 11). Let us add that Baal is the same name as Bel (Bil), and that Baal is the one supreme solar deity among the Phœnicians and in Syria. Certainly Baal, which like El (Il) had originally been the name of a distant god, later served to signify all the gods (Baalim) just as El (Ili) in Assyrian. Bel, who appears to have been

a solar deity, was afterwards worshipped under the name of Mardouk (Bel the Younger), god of the planet Jupiter, and then under that of Adar (Bel the Ancient) god of the planet Saturn. Now Adar, who is denoted by the same astrological number as is Bel; Adar, who also has the solar bull as symbol and is named the "first born of Bel;" Adar Malik is the Phœnician Moloch, the god of the planet Saturn, named Kewan (Amos v., 26) by the Babylonians as by the Hebrews, and Sakkout, well-known to us as Hercules Sandan, the mythic founder of Tarsus in Cilicia.

The Sidonian Astarte, the Aschera of the Syrians and the Israelites, is the Istar of Babylonia. M. Schrader thinks that Istar was originally, in the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates, the goddess of the planet Venus, and then that of the moon among the Phœnicians. M. de Baudissin, on the other hand, thinks that Istar—whose name, if Semitic, would mean "the blessed," or "she who gives happiness"—Istar the spouse of El, must have originally personified the generative forces of the earth, united to those of heaven, then the watery and fertile principle which, antithesis to the sun, was represented by the moon in ancient thought, and at length the beneficent planet Venus. Very early, in fact, as witnesses the ancient name of a town in the land of Basan (Gen. xiv., 5), Ashteroth-Karnaïm, "two-horned Astarte," this goddess replaced as lunar deity the god Sin, god of the moon, of whom she is styled "the daughter." That she became the goddess of the planet Venus is shown in the following words of an Assyrian syllabic: "The star of Venus at the sun-rising is Istar among the gods; the star of Venus at the sun-setting is Bilit among the gods." M. François Lenormant has already remarked: "In general, the gods of the planets are only forms, secondary manifestations of the superior deities."* That the Babylonian Istar was, like the Assyrian Aschera, a goddess of fertility, is very clearly shown in some verses of the descent of Istar into hell (V. 77—8). By

* "Essai de commentaire des Fragments cosmogoniques de Bérosee," p. 112.

the side of this Istar, the blessed, existed among the Assyrians a second Istar, a sinister and terrible goddess, who bears, in the sculptures, a bow and arrows : this is the goddess who represented what we still call the Star of the Morning, while that of the Evening Star was Bilit or Baaltis. Among the Babylonians Istar was surnamed Bilit (lady, mistress).* Among the Canaanites we again find the Assyrian distinction between Astarte and Baaltis (Bilit) ; Astarte represents the terrible, Baaltis the voluptuous side of the goddess. In Southern Arabia, in Yemen, in the country of the Sabceans—a country which has always maintained relations with the populations of the lower Euphrates—we meet Athtar, that is Istar under her Babylonian shape. Among the Arameans, as in the land of Moab (Aschtor-Kamosch) the goddess is adored in her union with the male deity ; it is the androgynous divinity Atergatis or Derketo (Athar-Athe), whose character is that of Bilit.

The deity is, in fact, conceived among the Semites as male and female, and if the two persons are often separated, it is yet not unusual to find them united into an androgynous form. It is a grave mistake to imagine that the most ancient form of the gods is androgynous, and that male and female deities have resulted therefrom, as branches from the trunk of a tree. The contrary is the truth. In the cosmogonies, as in the theogonies, of the various Semitic families, the male and female principles which unite in the creation of the universe or in divine genealogies are and remain distinct. Thus, according to Berosus, the demiourgos Bel cuts or divides in twain the goddess of gloomy chaos, and produces the sky and the earth. In the first cosmogony of Sanchoniathon, like that of the genesis of the Hebrews, the universe is born of Wind and of Chaos, under the action of Desire. Mochus replaces the Wind by Ether, Chaos by Air. In the Phœnician cosmogony preserved by Eudemus, it is Time and Cloud. None of these cosmogonies, although

* The proper name of Istar, like that of El, Baal, Malik, Bilit, has become an appellation, signifying goddesses, Istarâti.

relatively modern, gives birth to the world by an androgynous principle. An androgynous god, such as the Aschtor-Kamosh of Moab, bears witness that he is not anterior but posterior to the deities who compose him. Although with no more female termination than Istar, Aschtor and Athtar are none the less goddesses. Later, these goddesses denote an androgynous god, like Aphroditus in Greek, Lunus in Latin, etc. What may be said is that the greater number of the names of Semitic goddesses are derived from the names of the gods with whom they are associated as spouses; Bilit and Bil, Aschera and Assour, Anat and Anou, etc. The goddess is, in a sense, the passive nature, the reflection of the splendor of the male deity. It is in this sense that must be understood the name Pen-Baal, the ordinary title of the goddess Tanit in Phœnician inscriptions of Carthage. The consort of Baal was thus denoted, a signification perfectly agreeable to the primitive meaning of the word *pen*, "face," "side."

It is now a matter of demonstration that at the time of the exodus from Egypt, in the desert, and even in the time of the Judges, light and fire were not to the Israelites mere symbols of the deity, but were the deity himself. Iahveh, god of light and fire, was nothing more, according to some authors, than the sun as Moloch. Like Moloch, in fact, he is represented under the image of a young bull of metal—brass, iron, or gold. The golden calf worshipped in the desert was no more an Egyptian idol than were the two bulls of the same metal worshipped, in the time of Jeroboam, in the sanctuaries of Dan and Beth-El. Iahveh is not an Egyptian god. The time has gone by when the religions, and even the philosophic systems of nations the most diverse, were regarded as successive and universal borrowings. This was but an easy way of tracing all back to a pretended primitive revelation. A doctrine entirely contrary has prevailed in science. And, to begin with, how is it possible to imagine that hordes like those of Beni-Israel could have understood anything of Egyptian civilisation, and have gone so far as even to borrow religious ideas? Certainly, a sojourn of several centuries in a country, of four hundred years

and more, must modify the habits of a nation, and it is certain that the Phœnicians, and especially the Hebrews, borrowed much from Egypt, but these borrowings were all superficial, and had only to do with certain material details of civilisation, worship and sacerdotal institution, such as the holy ark, the breastplate of the high priest, the linen robe and certain portions of priestly vesture, the sacred utensils for sacrifice, etc. Thus the Hebrews borrowed from Assyria the winged human-headed bulls found at the gates of every palace, the cherubim which guard the entrance of the terrestrial paradise, of the ark of the covenant, and of the Holy of Holies in the temple of Solomon, and who also serve as steeds to Iahveh. As to Egypt, it is even probable that the borrowings were partially made after the time of the exodus.

These shepherds, encamped in the ancient land of the Pharaohs, might have remained there for a thousand years without making a solitary progressive step. They only saw Egypt from without. More numerous, they would doubtless have crushed out the civilisation of the nations of the Valley of the Nile, but they would never have understood it. They remained as alien to all superior culture as do the Bedouins of our own day, who keep their patriarchal manners within a few leagues of Damascus and Bagdad. The other nomadic Semites, who invaded Egypt, did not adopt the indigenous religion. M. de Rougé has, however, proved the existence of a religion originally common to some populations of both the Delta and Syria. He admits a common parentage for Misraïm and Canaan. The god Set or Sutech of the Egyptian monuments, the adversary of Osiris ere he became the national god of the shepherds, had been worshipped in Egypt for centuries. The Semitic name for Set was Sched. We thus find in Egypt from these remote times the Shaddaï, or "Almighty" of the Hebrews. We have here again one of those names in the Syro-Phœnician mythology which have been proved to originate in the mythology of Chaldea and Assyria.*

* The name Asit, or Asid, which may be seen on the most ancient

Iahveh is no more an Egyptian god than he is Moloch, I mean a god of fire or of the sun, at least in origin, as we shall soon see by a comparison of the two deities. The mysterious tetragrammeton, the ineffable word whose letters in the Bible are sounded as Adonai, shows very clearly the root *hava*, a very ancient root that no longer exists in ordinary Hebrew, but that we find in an allied dialect, Aramean, and to which answers the Hebrew *haya*, to be. M. Schrader has no doubt that this verb is merely a softening of the root *chava* and *chaya*, to blow, to breathe, to live, the primitive pronunciation of which is preserved in the name of Adam's wife, *Chavra*, Eve. In the Semitic language, as in all others, the roots which express the idea of existence are naturally derived from more concrete primitive significations. The ancient deity, Iahveh, whose name we hear in the hiphil conjugation of the verb, that is to say in the causative sense, signifies he who gives breath or life, thus existence or being.*

The Aramean name of the god Iahveh proves at once its high antiquity and its Assyro-Babylonian origin. When the Terahites abandoned Chaldea and crossed the Euphrates, they already worshipped, among others, the god Iahveh; they worshipped him during their first sojourn in the land of Canaan, they worshipped him in Egypt, and it was doubtless the ark of this god which they carried in the desert. If he was not originally as popular as the other deities of Israel, if it required centuries ere he became the national god of this nation, and centuries more ere he was regarded as the only god of the universe, there is nothing in this which need surprise us. According to all appearances, the worship of Iahveh belonged specially to the aristocracy of the Terahite tribes. Does not Max Müller

epigraphic monument of Assyria (the nineteenth century before the Christian era), which is sometimes given to Assour, with a prosthetic *a* which cannot hide the root from recognition, is the same as the Hebrew Schaddai. Now Assour is merely the Assyrian form of the supreme god Ilou, El. François Lenormant, "Essai de commentaire des Fragments cosmogoniques de Bérosee," p. 271.

* The dogmatic etymology of Exodus (iii., 14) is no more reliable than the allegation of the editor a little further on (vi. 3).

teach that religions have belonged first to families and to very restricted communities?

One might suppose, *à priori*, that Iahveh was an ancient deity of Aramean polytheism, adopted by the Hebrews, and by the other nations of the valley of the Jordan, and by the Syrians and Phœnicians, for Iahveh was by no means the especial property of the Beni-Israel. If we are to believe the Bible itself (Numbers xxii.—xxiv.) Balak ben Tsiapor, king of the Moabites, menaced with invasion by the Beni-Israel, sent the elders of Moab and Midian to the banks of the Euphrates, to a famous seer, Bileâm ben Behor, [Balaam, the son of Beor, TR.] that he should come and curse the invaders. Now this seer of Mesopotamia, the soothsayer Bileâm, blessed and cursed in the name of Iahveh. Let us note in passing that Bileâm adores Baal at the same time, raises altars to him and sacrifices to him oxen and rams. Movers and others have shown that the name Iahveh denoted the supreme god among several Semitic nations. This name is found in its contracted form in many Canaanite and Phœnician proper names. The Greek writers know Iaou or Iao.*

The presence of Iahveh in the Syro-Phœnician Pantheon has been sufficiently proved.† Like El, Elion, Adonis, etc., Iahveh is a god common to the Hebrews and the neighboring nations of the same race and same tongue. There is nothing astonishing in this, and those even who maintain that the name can be traced back to Moses do not probably suppose that he invented it. It must then have been already in existence, and

* Perhaps the most curious text which may here be recalled is that of the oracle of Apollo of Claros, preserved by Macrobius (Saturn i., 18), and which is not, as Lobeck and Movers have proved, the apochryphal work of a Gnostic Christian. It appears from this oracle that Iao is the greatest of the gods, the supreme deity, the solar god viewed under four aspects, which are the four seasons of the year. He is Hades in winter, Zeus in spring, the Sun in summer, and Iao in autumn. The epithet "gentle" and "effeminate" here given to Iao show clearly that we have to do with Adonis, the centre of whose worship was at Byblos, in Lebanon, and whom Sanchoniathon calls the "Most High," Elion, like the god of Melchizedek.

† Fr. Lenormant, "Lettres Assyriologiques," II., 197 *et seq.*

we can only regard it as having belonged to the Euphratico-Syrian religions. It is impossible to ally Iahveh with Ia, the Ao of Damascius—the name of the third cosmic divinity of the first Babylonian triad—since we know that Ia is an Accadian name, while Iahveh is essentially Semitic. Schrader and others have further read this name on the cuneiform inscriptions of Assyria.* This learned writer finds that the symbol of the syllables found thereupon is rendered sometimes by *Iahou*, sometimes by *Ilou*, plainly showing that, for the Assyrians, *Iahou* was the equivalent of *ilou*, god. Thus, the king of Hamath in the inscriptions of Khorsabad is sometimes called *Iahoubid*, sometimes *Iloubid*, just as the son of Josiah, king of Judah, bore the two names of Eliachim and Jehoiachim.† It is then probable that Iahou or Iahveh had for cradle, like almost all the gods of the Semites of early Asia, the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates. It is at least certain that the Assyrians had a root *hava*, with the meaning “to breathe.” Iahou denoted he who breathes, or causes to breathe, whether by this was meant the god of the wind, a kind of atmospheric divinity, like Bin or Rimmon (Ramman), or the living one, he who lives or who gives life. This name or this god (for it is all the same) emigrated from Babylonia and Assyria with the Semites of the North and West, with the Arameans, Canaanites, and Terahite tribes; one of the latter, the Beni-Israel, without excluding the other gods of their race, made Iahveh their national god, as the Ammonites chose Milcom, the Moabites Kemosh, and it was not until after long ages that this god became the only god of Israel, and then of all peoples.

In all the books of the Pentateuch, save Deuteronomy, Iahveh is not the sole god of the Hebrews, he is only the most mighty of all the gods. Iahveh is El Elohim, the god of gods, as Zeus or Indra. This polytheism, developed on the old foundation of

* See the articles “Iahve” in the *Bibel Lexicon* of Schenkel, Vol. III. Cf. another article by Schrader on “Iahve zebaoth,” in the *Lahrbücher für protest. Theologie*. No. 2., p. 316 (1875).

† 2 Kings xxiii., 34; xxiv., 1; Jer. i., 8.

Semitic mythology, breaks out in all the old books of Israel.

We readily admit that the mythology of the Semites, compared with that of the Aryans, reveals a poverty and aridity which strike the most careless. Nearly all the divine names by which these races have denoted the supreme deity, express merely the elevation or strength of the divine nature; they are as a confession of helplessness, as a cry of adoration or of terror from the human soul before the sublime or terrible spectacle of earth or sky. M. Kuenen derives Elohim, the plural of Eloah, from a verb which, in Arabic, signifies to fear. Nevertheless, the Semites have also, to a certain extent, deified the forces of nature, and above all the stars. The Semitic religions are essentially astrolatrous. Sanchoniathon says that "the sun, moon, and planets, and the elements * were regarded as deities by the Phœnicians." He thus bears witness to the fact that the Phœnician was a pantheistic natural religion. "As far as we can follow it into the past," says M. de Baudissin, "we see it resting on the deification of all the forces of nature; the powers of the luminous heaven are gods, as are those of the fertilising waters; the verdant trees of earth, or the meteorites fallen from the sky, all are footsteps of the godhead."† M. de Baudissin is persuaded that El (or Assour among the Assyrians), as also the gods of the Babylonian triad, Anou, Bil, and Ao (Ia), originally represented the forces of nature. This naturalistic character was gradually obliterated as time went on. But Anou still appears as the ruler of the sky in the following words from the episode of the "Deluge" (line 106—108): "In heaven, the gods feared the tempests, and sought for refuge; they ascended to the heaven of Anou."‡ The symbol of Assour, the happy god, or

* "Philo Byblius." *Fragm. I.*, section 7, in the "*Fragmenta historicor.*," *græcor.* of Ch. Mueller. III., 564.

† "Studien zur semitischen Religionsgeschichte," pp. 44—45. Cf. *Iahve et Moloch*, p. 17.

‡ Fr. Lenormant, "*Les premières Civilisations.*" II., 39. This learned writer thinks that the "heaven of Anou" signifies the highest part of the heaven of the fixed stars.

the god who gives happiness—the winged disk—is a solar symbol, as are the bow and arrows, also the emblems of this god. Bal or Bil, the revealing god, the demiourgos, has his forehead surmounted by the horns of the bull, a solar animal. Among the gods of the second triad, the words Samas and Sin were appellatives of the sun and moon before becoming the proper names of deities. Samas, the sun, became the minister of the solar god Bel, and the worships of the two divinities, essentially the same in origin, were not confounded together. Thus the Hebrews, who worshipped Baal, a solar deity, did not neglect to render adoration to the sun himself (2 Kings xxiii., 5 and 11). Samas, like Bel or Baal, like the Beelsamen of Sanchoniathon, is the “ruler of heaven.” Bin is the god of the atmosphere. It is needless to recall the five great deities of the planets, Jupiter (Mardouk), Venus (Istar), Saturn (Adar), Mars (Nergal), and Mercury (Nebo).

CHAPTER V.

LEAVING on one side the stories of the creation, the fall, the antediluvian patriarchs, the deluge, etc., we find in Genesis a whole Semitic mythology. Certain myths are there already transformed into legends. Thus, in the story (Gen. vi.) which relates how the "sons of God"—that is, angels—took wives of the daughters of men, we recognise a very ancient legend of the union of the gods with men, whence was born a race of heroes. This legend, as M. de Baudissin has very justly remarked, has been accommodated to the monotheism of the religion of Israel; in this gods could not be spoken of, so they became beings resembling Iahveh, the "sons of god." Otherwise nothing has been changed in the original conception of the pagan myth; the sons of god behave like regular gods, I mean they act as they please, without being obliged to answer for their conduct, with the naïve immorality of nature. Certain poetical metaphors might easily have given rise to these myths. Thus Job speaks of the "eyelids of the morning" (iii., 9; xli., 18). A famous psalm compares the rising sun to a "bridegroom coming out of his chamber and rejoicing as a strong man to run a race." Without doubt from such metaphors grew up the story of the sun standing still at the command of Joshua (Josh. x., 12). "Such a tale," says Th. Noeldeke, "might equally well have arisen from the words of Deborah: 'They fought from heaven, the stars in their courses fought.'"^{*} M. de Baudissin is inclined to think that there is more than a metaphor in these words, for the Israelites, like the other nations of their race, notoriously worshipped the stars as living

^{*} "Histoire Littéraire de l'Ancien Testament," p. 12. Cf. p. 54 of our translation.

beings. It is thus that in Job it is said that the stars of the morning sang together at the creation (xxxviii., 7). It is certainly incontestable that this poem is at the bottom monotheistic; but such phrases are as the unconscious survivals of ancient mythic ideas, bequeathed in the blood by the fathers to their far-off posterity.

The name of the divinity which appears in almost every verse of the Bible, Elohim, is a plural. The plural Elohim, a word which later denotes the divinity in a general manner, by itself witnesses that polytheism preceded monotheism among the Hebrews,* for Elohim necessarily implies an original plurality of gods. It has been pretended that it is a plural of majesty or of grandeur, conformably to the usage of language which expresses abstractions by a plural. Certainly, at the period at which the Old Testament was edited, no one thought of expressing a plurality of gods by this word. Elohim denoted Iahveh as well as Kemosh (Judges xi., 24), that is to say, a single or national deity. But this was because, as happens in all religions, the original meaning of the word had passed away. Among the learned men who admit the primitively polytheistic signification of the word Elohim, it will be enough to quote Ewald. "The origin of this plural as denoting God implies," says this writer, "that in the far-off time when this word was formed, several gods were imagined." Besides, as we have seen, the Bible itself tells us that, on the other side of the flood, that is, in Mesopotamia, the ancestors of the Hebrews were polytheists. Why should the Decalogue, the Ten Words (Ex. xx.), have forbidden the Hebrews to worship "other gods" and to adore graven images (commands, it is true, of a much later date), if they only knew Iahveh, and believed in none save in him?

The latest revisers of the scriptures did not succeed in so effacing every trace of polytheism as to exclude some striking marks of it in certain fashions of speech which survived the ruin of the ancient beliefs of Israel.†

* Baudissin, "Iahve et Moloch," p. 2; "Studien," p. 55.

† Gesenius, "Thesaurus lingue hebræe et Chaldæe," I, 96, col. 2.

Popular phrases—the most certain and authentic monuments of the thoughts of a people—do not always lend themselves to the pious scruples of the scribes.* In some parallel passages—as 2 Sam. vii., 23, and 1 Chron. xvii., 21; Ex. xxxii., 4, 8; and Neh. ix., 18—the more ancient translation makes the word agree with Elohim, while the more modern writes it in the singular. In some passages, of which we have two readings, the word Iahveh has been substituted for Elohim. In the books of the prophets the name of Iahveh is beyond all comparison the usual word for the deity. The word Elohim is very rare in this sense, and is only employed in certain formularies of phrases consecrated by usage. On the other hand, the more we go back to the more ancient monuments of Hebrew literature, the more frequent do we find the use of the word Elohim. Leviticus and Numbers (except xii.—xxiv.) are Jahvistic, while in Exodus the Elohist and Jahvistic documents are of about equal length, and the first are dominant in Genesis. For us, Elohim is the plural of Eloah. Elohim implies several Eloahs. Elohim is the clear and undeniable proof of the primitive polytheism of the Beni-Israel.

The whole religious history of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah is in most striking contrast with the letter and spirit of the commandments of the Decalogue. The old naturalistic worship of the Hebrews has left traces impossible to mistake in the epilogue of Jotham (Judges ix., 13, cf. 9): “And the vine said unto them, should I leave my wine which cheereth gods and men?” It is certainly not of Iahveh that the witch of Endor speaks when she cries, on seeing the shade of Samuel: “I saw Elohim ascending out of the earth” (1 Sam. xxviii., 13). When Joash, the father of Gideon, says of Baal, whose altar his son had overthrown, “If he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar” (Judges vi., 31), he clearly doubts the deity of Baal, but he seems to admit the existence of other gods side by side with Iahveh. All

* Gen. xx., 13; xxxv., 7; Ex. xxii., 28; xxxii., 4, 8; Deut. v., 7; Josh. xxiv., 20; cf. 1 Sam. xvii., 26, 36; 2 Sam. vii., 23; 1 Kings xix., 2; Jer. x., 10; xxiii., 86.

hesitation on this point vanishes when we read the naive words placed by an ancient tradition in the mouth of Jacob: "If Elohim will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then Iahveh shall be my god" (Gen. xxviii., 20, 21). Laban, addressing Jacob (Gen. xxxi., 53), expressly distinguishes between the god of Abraham, the god of Nahor and the god of Isaac: "The god of Abraham, and the god of Nahor, judge between us, the gods of their father," that is of Terah. The plural of the verb plainly shows that the god of Abraham was not the god of Nahor.

Without doubt Terah was as notoriously polytheistic as Solomon, in legendary tradition; it appeared, therefore, quite natural that Nahor and Laban, who had not, like Abraham, received a divine revelation, should have remained pagans. But to those who cannot admit such a revelation, the mythic ancestor of the Hebrews—I mean the ancient fathers of the family of Israel, the Abrahamides, if they already rendered worship to Iahveh as to the principal god of their tribe, did neither more nor less than the Nahorides, and the other tribes descended from Terah, the Moabites, Edomites, etc. Each of the tribes claimed primacy for the chief deity of their fathers; none dreamed of denying that side by side with this deity there were also others.

We shall show that for a long time this was the belief of the Hebrews, and it must have been that of other nations. When Rahab, the harlot of Jericho, said to the spies of Joshua: "For the lord your god, he is god in heaven above and in earth beneath" (Josh. ii., 11), she did not renounce the gods of her people; Iahveh is to her the god of the Israelites; she believes him to be terrible, for she has heard of the prodigies wrought by him for Israel in Egypt and in the land of Canaan. The Philistines, the Gibeonites, Hiram, the king of Tyre, the queen of Sheba, speak in the same way of Iahveh, the god of Israel. "Their gods are gods of the hills," said the routed Syrians of the Hebrews (1 Kings xx., 23, 28). Lastly, the Assyrian Rabshakek from Sennacheris, sent to Hezekiah, who

talked so sensibly to the fanatics crowded on the walls of Jerusalem, speaks of the god of the Jews as of the gods of Hamath and Arpad. Doubtless it is natural enough that an Assyrian should speak in this way of the divinities of Syria and Palestine; but, while this manner of looking at the various religions is necessarily that of the modern historian, it can be shown that, for many centuries, it was also that of the Hebrews.*

How, indeed, could their religious ideas have differed on this head from those of their neighbors; the passages are numerous which proclaim that Iahveh is greater and more powerful than all other gods. "Who is like unto thee, Iahveh, among the gods" (Ex. xv., 11)? says the song of Moses. A Hebrew could speak in no other way of the god who, according to his belief, had "saved him from the hand of the Egyptians." Jethro was not the only one who was converted to Iahveh by this miracle. But does not the very fact that Iahveh is to his worshippers the greatest of the gods, imply that there are others?

It is important to clearly distinguish the epochs, and, as it were, the *moments* of the evolution of Iahveh. It is very evident that, from the time of Hosea, Jeremiah, Deuteronomy, of the books of Kings, and some psalms, the gods of other nations are to the monotheistic aristocracy of Israel mere "graven images," statues of wood or of metal, and that these empty simulacra, mere nothings, are powerless. With Jeremiah and the later Jewish writers the hatred of Paganism is pushed to such an extent that the very name of Baal—a name still in favor during the time of David—has become a horrible scandal. It is erased, and replaced by the word "abomination," *boschet*.† Nothing is better established than the gloomy and severe monotheism of the

* Gen. xliii., 28; Ex. xxxii., 12; Numb. xiv., 16; Deut. ix., 28.

† An editor of the Book of Samuel has thus modified the names which, in Chronicles and in Judges, retain their original form. Thus a son of Saul, Esbaal (1 Chron., viii., 33; ix., 39), becomes Isboschet (2 Sam., ii.—iv.) Gideon, surnamed Jerubbaal in the Book of Judges (vi., 32; cf. lxx., *Ιεροβααλ*; 2 Sam. xi., 21) is called Jerubbeschet in 2 Sam. xi., 21. The son of Jonathan, Meribaal, then Meribbaal

later editors of the Jewish scriptures, and of the prophets of the age of Jeremiah. Besides, while there existed also other prophets, and these the most numerous, who, with the people and the kings of Judah and of Israel, continued to see in Iahveh a mere national deity, this theological conception had been that also of the ancient seers, who spake oracles in the name of Iahveh. We are not speaking of purely polytheistic kings like Solomon, who says to Hiram that Iahveh, god of Israel, is above all gods,* but who none the less builds temples to other divinities, to Astarte of Sidon, to Milcom of the Ammonites, to Kemosh of Moab (1 Kings, xi., 7, etc.), and this not to please his wives, as has been pretended, since at that period there was certainly no notion of the enlightened toleration of our own time. In thus acting, Solomon thought like most of the kings who succeeded him, and like the greater part of the nation. The gods of Canaan and of Syria did not seem less real than the god of Israel; besides, they were ancient gods who were well known as old objects of worship, adored from long ago, and by innumerable generations, from Babylonia to the plains of Aramea, from Egypt to the land of Canaan.

But Elijah the Tishbite, "the man of God," the savage seer in his hairy garment, with a leathern girdle about his loins—Elijah, one of the greatest figures that we recognise among the Hebrew prophets—does he not use words which imply belief in the existence of gods other than his own, when he says to those sent by Ahaziah to consult the oracle of the Phœnician god Baal-Zeboub at Ekron: "Is it not because there is not a god in Israel, that ye go to enquire of Baal-Zeboub, the god of Ekron?" (2 Kings i., 3). Amos does not confuse the gods of other nations with the tablets and the statues which represent them. He notices without commentary the pagan oath, "Thy god, O Dan, liveth!" (viii., 14.) All the ancient prophets anterior

(1 Chron. viii., 34; ix., 40) becomes Mephiboschet (2 Sam. iv., 4; ix., 6; cf. xxi., 8). In the same way Beeliada (1 Chron. xiv., 7) has been changed into Eliada (2 Sam. v., 16). V. Baudissin, "Studien," p. 108—109.

* 2 Chron. ii., 4; cf. 1 Kings v., 17.

to Isaiah and Jeremiah speak as though it might properly be thought that there existed for other nations other gods than Iahveh, the god of Israel.* How far removed are these from the idea that the gods of other nations are but of wood and metal, and from affirming that Iahveh is the one god, to whom all the nations of the earth shall turn ! This idea of the divine unity, this notion of the universality of Iahveh, was only evolved after long centuries of polytheism and of the religious sectarianism of Israel. In spite of all that has been said, the name of the god of Melchisedek (Gen. xiv., 18), El Elyôn, does not imply the divine unity, monotheism ; his god is only conceived as being greater than all other gods. We have seen that nothing in the name Iahveh, even if it signifies the "I am," he who is, implies the divine unity, but this was not the primary meaning of this god. The ancient religion of the Israelites, and certainly that of Moses himself (Ex. iii., 13) consisted in the adoration of the national god, the "god of the Hebrews" (Ex. iv., 18; v., 3; vii., 16; x., 3).

Yet more, Iahveh was at first a purely local divinity. For the ancient Hebrews, not merely was Iahveh god over Israel alone, but he was really present, he saw and heard only in the land of his people: beyond the limits of the territory which he had conquered and had bequeathed as heritage to Israel, it was no longer Iahveh, but it was other gods, equally lords and masters of their own domains, who reigned. We may even add that Iahveh, like an ancient fetish, perhaps in the form of an aerolite, dwelt especially in the ark ; he had thus marched through the desert in the midst of his people ; more than once the mere presence of the ark on the field of battle had decided the victory. We cannot doubt that for David and his contemporaries the ark was the "house of the lord." This ambulatory house of god was a terrible thing, sinister, scarcely safe even for believers, and before it they all trembled, Israelites and Philistines alike (1 Sam. vi., 20). It was this god who had given the land to his people, as Kemosh had given to his. Thus the messengers of

* Cf. Joel ii., 27 ; Micah vii., 18.

Jephthah said to the king of the Ammonites : " Wilt not thou possess that which Kemosh thy god giveth thee to possess ? So whomsoever the lord our god shall drive out from before us, them will we possess " (Judges xi., 24). It has been well remarked that all that we see on the recently-discovered tablet which Mescha, king of Moab, raised to his god Kemosh, might have been equally well found on a similar monument, on an *Ebenazer*, raised to his god Iahveh by a king of Judah or of Israel. Kemosh in fact, angry with his people, had delivered them into the hands of their enemies ; he again became favorable to them and crushed the adversaries of the king of Moab. Iahveh, whose name is mentioned in this tablet, speaks and acts in no other fashion in the books of his people.

Israel was " the people of Iahveh " just as Moab was " the people of Kemosh," the chosen people, the elect of the god. An ancient chant, preserved in Numbers (xxi., 29) shows this yet more plainly :—

" Woe to thee, Moab !
Thou art undone, O people of Kemosh !
He has given his sons that escaped,
And his daughters, into captivity." *

When Jacob, at Karan, awakes from the famous dream in which he saw angels and heard the voice of Iahveh, " Surely," says he, " Iahveh is in this place and I knew it not " (Gen. xxviii., 16). He was in Mesopotamia and considered himself to be out of the domain of his god. When the colonists, sent by the king of Assyria to the depopulated towns of Samaria, settled in the country, lions infested the land. The colonists did not doubt that this scourge was sent by the " god of the land," namely by Iahveh, whom they could not propitiate, being ignorant of the rites of his worship. They therefore humbly implored the king of Assyria to send back to them one of the priests of Iahveh, who had been led captive from Samaria, in order that he might teach them " the manner of the god of the land "

* Cf. the passage in which Jeremiah (xlviii., 46), evidently alluding to this song, changes the active to the passive, so as to avoid saying that Kemosh has done anything.

(2 Kings xvii., 25—28). While continuing to adore Istar, Bilit, Adar, Arion, etc., these ancestors of the Samaritans rendered worship to Iahveh as the local deity, recognising the rights of property exercised by the god over his own domain. The land itself—not figuratively, but really—belonged to the god. Thus the Syrian Naaman, coming to the land of Israel to be cured of his leprosy by the prophet Elisha (2 Kings v.), asked that he might take away with him “two mules burden of earth,” so that he might offer holocausts and sacrifices to Iahveh on this earth heaped into a mound, or *bâma*, in the land of the god Rimmon. This earth was holy earth, earth from the domain of Iahveh; it was only on this that prayer and sacrifice could be offered to him. In the mind of Ruth, and of her mother-in-law Naomi (in that charming idyll, composed at a period when the family of David was still on the throne), the idea of returning to the land of Moab is indissolubly bound up with that of the worship of the Moabitish deities, as though it were a matter of course that the god of Moab should be worshipped among the Moabites, and the god of Israel among the Israelites. “Behold,” says Naomi to Ruth, “thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people and unto her gods” (chap. i., 15, cf. Boaz’ speech ii., 12). David himself, who was not, and who could not have been, the monotheistic king of tradition, David, who had *teraphim* in his house as had Jacob in his time, does he not seem to restrict the kingdom of Iahveh to the land of Israel, when he complains that Saul has driven him out from “abiding in the inheritance of Iahveh, saying: ‘Go, serve other gods’” (1 Sam. xxvi., 19). Finally, many centuries afterwards, the contemporaries of Ezekiel still believed that Iahveh, having abandoned the country, could no longer see them (Eze. viii., 8; ix. 9): Iahveh to them was only a local divinity, whose presence was bound up with that of his ark or that of his worship.

CHAPTER VI.

IAHVEH has often been compared to Moloch or Molech, a Semitic god, adored by the Canaanites in common with the Assyrians and with almost all the nations of Syria and Palestine, not excepting the Hebrews. Can Iahveh and Moloch be identified, at least in origin? Has the purified and spiritualised idea of the god of Christians and Mussulmans emerged, by evolution, from the sanguinary and sinister worship of Moloch? It is not only Daumer who has thought that it is so, but Movers, Kuenen, Tiel, Finzi, Duncker, all hold the same belief. Nevertheless it seems at first very difficult to admit the identification. Comparative mythology has only become a science by bowing to the severe method and rigorous procedure of classical philology. Since all gods, finally analysed, are but names, reflecting more or less faithfully the aspect of the natural phenomena which they originally personified, it is on these names, above all, that insistence should be made. Now Moloch and Iahveh are derived from roots expressing ideas wholly diverse. We have pointed out the primitive meaning of the word Iahveh. Moloch, "lord," or "king," is merely a surname borne in Assyria by the god Adar, as by all the other gods. People said: Assour-malik, Anou-malik, Bil-malik, Samas-malik, Nabu-malik, that is, "Assour is king," etc. Adar, god of the planet Saturn, called also Bel the Ancient, was originally the solar Babylonian god Bel or Bil, as was also the god of the planet Jupiter, Mardouk, Bel the Younger. The distinction between Bel the Ancient and Bel the Younger is not relatively very antique. The Bel from whom they are derived is himself not the most ancient of the Semitic gods of Babylonia; he is only, with Anou and Ia, one of the gods of the first triad. The god Bel the Ancient, or Bel

etân, is not the eternal god, without beginning; the epithet only serves to distinguish the god of the planet Saturn from the younger Bel, presiding over the planet Jupiter. Later, the Babylonians used the name Bel etân to signify eternity. The author of the book of Daniel, who calls Iahveh "the Ancient of Days" (Dan. vii., 9), evidently adopts this theological notion. Bel the Ancient, or Adar-malik, god of the planet Saturn, became the Canaanitish Moloch, the Melkart of Tyre, etc.; the Greeks named him Kronos. They may perhaps have been acquainted with the solar origin of this planetary deity, for they called Saturn the star of the sun.

So far as he was a deity primarily solar, Moloch was the god of the devouring sun who destroys and burns like fire. The Baal of Carthage, identical with the Melkart of the mother-city, bears in many inscriptions the name of Baal-Chamman, "Solar Baal." On a Carthaginian cippus, the god has a nimbus round his head. As the god of the planet Saturn (Adar) he has the same characteristics; he is the "great misfortune" of the Arabs. The prophet Amos also bears witness that the god of the planet Saturn was Moloch, when, speaking to the Israelites, he says of Kewan, one of the Assyrian names of this planet, "your Moloch" (v. 26). The Bible tells us that the Assyrian colonists (2 Kings xvii., 3) settled in the land of Samaria, burned human victims to Adar (Adarmelech) that is to Moloch, as did also the Israelites themselves (Jeremiah, xix., 5; xxxii., 35). Every one agrees that Moloch was a god of fire, to whom human sacrifices were offered. Were these victims burned alive? According to some exegetists they were first slain. The devotees of the god believed that he devoured the victims "as food" (Ezekiel xxiii., 37; cf. xvi., 20). The traditions concerning the rites of these sacrifices do not seem to us sufficiently precise to enable us to decide whether the victims were slain before being burned. It is even said that they were often only "passed through," purified by the fire. Good judges, among whom are Gesenius and Movers, hold a contrary opinion, and think that a real combustion is meant in the passages to which we allude.

Abraham Geiger, whose authority ranked so high as a critic of the text of the Old Testament, also considered that the hebrew verb "to make pass" was only introduced as a euphuism instead of the verb "to burn with fire." A fire burned perpetually on the altar of Melkart, that is Moloch, at Gades as at Tyre. The inscription on a scarabeus* shews us that this god was also the celestial fire, the thunder.

What were the image and the symbol of Moloch? Although the rabbinical and classical traditions are very doubtful on this point, and the Bible is absolutely silent, we know that Moloch had the form of a bull, with horns on his forehead, like the Minotaur of Crete. In Crete as in Rhodes, in Phœnicia as at Carthage, in the land of Moab as in Judea, human sacrifices must have been used to drive away the enemy or for deliverance from scourge—pestilence, famine, drought. They hoped to propitiate, to soften the god by offering to him the most precious victims, men, young children, above all newly-born infants, only and beloved children, sons and daughters of kings or of royal blood. Loud and savage music of drums and funeral flutes accompanied these *auto-da-fé*.

Such was Moloch. In what did Iahveh resemble Moloch? In what did he differ from Moloch? We have already said that nothing indicates that Iahveh, like Moloch, was originally either a solar or a planetary deity. As far as can be judged from his name, Iahveh was at first a god of the atmosphere, like Bin or Rimmon; but there is nothing, absolutely nothing, in the Semitic root of the name of Iahveh which allows us to suppose that he was originally a solar god. We ought perhaps to further admit that the very numerous passages in the Bible in which Iahveh is represented as manifesting himself by fire, by light, or by dark clouds thunder-riven, do not prove that this god was primitively a deity of light and fire.

The history of the religion of the Hebrews bears witness that among them also the religious idea was born from the feeling of fear. "The fear of God,"

* M. de Vogüe, *Mélanges d'archéologie*, p. 81.

such is the foundation of the whole religion of Israel. The passages which might be cited on this point are innumerable. Jacob swears by "the fear of Isaac," his father. Iahveh, like Indra and like Zeus, manifests himself in the forces of nature and in atmospheric phenomena. The wind is his breath, his voice is the thunder which shakes the desert and breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon. He causes the snow and the hail to fall, he scatters the hoarfrost, he spreads ice and cold. It is he who lifts up the sea when the billows are unchained. But it is above all by fire that Iahveh reveals himself to his worshippers. Tempest, lightnings, and thunder announce his arrival on Horeb or Sinai, where he appeared in flame in the midst of a burning bush, which yet was not consumed. We see him descend, the darkness under his feet, borne on the wings of a *keroub*. Smoke goeth from his nostrils, and a devouring fire from his mouth. From the heavens Iahveh thunders, and Elion (the "Most High" of the Phœnicians) gives forth his voice. He sends out his arrows and disperses his enemies, he shoots out lightnings and consumes them. In the desert Iahveh marched before the Beni-Israel, in the day as a pillar of cloud, at night as a pillar of fire. He appeared to Abram in the midst of the darkness of night like a "smoking furnace." To shew that he approved of sacrifice, he passed as a burning lamp between the severed pieces of the victims spread out upon the altar. He revealed himself thus to Abraham, to Gibeon, and to Elijah. Let us also remember that among the Hebrews, as among the Persians, fire is "clean." The "eternal fire" must be kept up by a priest. It burned on the altar of the temple of Jerusalem as upon that of Melkart at Tyre. Of the victims thus immolated—bulls, rams, sheep, goats, birds—Iahveh reserves to himself specially the fat, the smell of which he finds pleasant when it shrivels as it falls into the fire and mounts heavenward in black clouds of smoke. "All the fat is Iahveh's," we read in Leviticus (iii., 16; xvii., 6). He trembles with joy at the thought of slaughter, of a massacre, of a butchery of men and animals. He runs down with blood and fat. "The

sword of the Lord is filled with blood," says even Isaiah (xxxiv., 6), "it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and of goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams."

When we read in an ancient song attributed to David (2 Sam. xxii., 9; cf. Ps. xviii., 8):

"There went up a smoke out of his nostrils,
And fire out of his mouth devoured;
Coals were kindled by it. . . ."

It is perfectly true that in the mouth of the pious Israelite of the time of Ezra, these words are but figures of speech, images, metaphors. But can it be argued that they have been arbitrarily chosen? "Such a style of expression betrays a style of precedent thought. While admitting that the Iahveh of the prophets is not a pendant to Moloch, we affirm without hesitation that a worship analogous to that of Moloch, very similar to it, was that found in primitive Jahvism."* This view, which is that of Kuenen, seems to us accurate, always reserving the points we have noted as to the primal nature of Iahveh. That this god of the atmosphere, originally very different from Moloch, became a solar deity, is sufficiently proved by the character of Iao or Iahou among the Syrians, Phœnicians, and Greeks, as well as by many peculiarities of the Jewish religion. It is for this reason that while we ought always to distinguish Iahveh from Moloch and Baal, we cannot deny that to any unprejudiced observer the resemblances might well veil the differences.

The worship and the rites of the religion of Iahveh are naturally those of Kemosh, Baal, Moloch and Milcom, in short, of the deities of all the other Tera-hite tribes, belonging to the same race and of the same psychological constitution as the Hebrews. How should the worship rendered by Israel to his national

* "Une histoire de la religion d'Israël." By M. Carrière, in the *Revue de théologie*, 3 sér., vol. vii., p. 195 (Strasbourg, 1869). The whole of the weighty analysis made by M. Carrière of the celebrated work of Kuenen, "De godsdiens van Israël tot den ondergang van den joodschen staat" (Harlem, 1869), should be read.

god differ from that rendered by Moab to his, when the race, the language, and the civilisation of these two Semitic families had arrived at almost the same stage of development? Among all these nations the idea of god was associated with that of fear; their gods were the gods of blood and of fire, of insatiable furnaces. The *Cherem*, which devoted to extermination the towns of infidels in revolt against Iahveh, and destroyed by fire everything, down to plants and animals, in order that the sacrifice might be worthy of deities so terrible, reveals the sinister and ferocious nature of the national god of Israel. Here again we may ask: How did the *Cherem* of the people of Iahveh (a part of the Mosaic institutions) differ from the *Cherem* of the people of Kemosh, which is known to us by the tablet of Mescha, king of Moab? In both peoples we find the same religious frenzy of massacre and destruction. It was the will of the god! It was the holy war of Kemosh or of Iahveh.

However far we go back into the religious history of Israel, Iahveh, the national god, appears to us unto the form of a young bull of metal, the solar symbol which he had in common with Moloch. The golden calf, adored by the Israelites in the desert and in the promised land (Ex. xxxv., 4; Deut. ix., 21) was not—it cannot be too often repeated—an Egyptian idol, a reminiscence of Apis. This divine symbol of the bull is found also among the Assyrians and the Phœnicians. In the adoration of Iahveh under this form we must recognise a striking proof of the ancient naturalistic religion of the Hebrews. There was the god who brought Israel up out of the land of Egypt, as said Jeroboam (1 Kings xii., 28). About a century before Hosea and Amos, at the end of the tenth century and at the beginning of the ninth, Elijah and Elisha, two “men of god”—if indeed they be two—in any case fervent worshippers of Iahveh, made no opposition to the worship at Dan and at Beth-El, where Iahveh was adored under the form of a metal bull. At Beth-El, at Dan, at Silo, at Berseba, at Samaria, at Guilgal, the tribe of Israel, following the example of their neigh-

bors, celebrated the festivals of their national god, the feast of Iahveh, bull-god, by noisy dances, by sacrifices of oxen, of sheep and of men.*

There is, indeed, no doubt that human victims were offered to Iahveh. The young of man belonged to Iahveh, just as did the young of the animal and the fruit of the tree. All the gods of the Semites, El, Schaddai, Adon, Baal, Moloch, Iahveh, Kemosh, were conceived in the likeness of eastern monarchs. They had right absolute over all that was born or that died within their realms. Man admits his vassalage; he adores the "master," and brings to his lord the first fruits of his flock, his field and his family. Like Moloch, Iahveh claims all the first born. "The first born of thy sons shalt thou give unto me," says Iahveh, "for all the first born are mine." "Sanctify unto me all the first born, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast, it is mine" (Ex. xiii., 2; xxii., 29; Numb. iii., 13). Human sacrifices were doubtless offered in all the religions of the old and new worlds, but they held a large place in the Semitic, and only disappeared from it very late. In fact, wherever these religions have spread, even among other races, we rediscover traces of these sacrifices. In all the temples of the Phœnician colonies established along the borders and in the isles of the Mediterranean, at Carthage, in Sicily, at Marseilles, in Rhodes, at Salamis, in Crete, there were metal bulls, or brazen statues of the god. At certain fixed times, in certain expiatory ceremonies, or when it was desired to turn away some scourge, they threw men and children into the white-hot stomach of the bull or the arms of the statue.†

Nothing is better established than the existence of human sacrifices amongst the Hebrews in honor of Iahveh, and that down to the time of Josiah, perhaps even until the return from the Babylonish captivity. The time of the patriarchs affords us a famous example, in Genesis. The sacrifice of Isaac closely resembles

* "Revue de Théologie," p. 102. Cf. Hosea xii., 11; xiii., 2.

† Diodorus of Sicily, xx., 14, 68.

that of El, or Kronos, in Sanchoniathon, who immolates his only son to heaven. During their sojourn in Egypt, the Beni-Israel continued to offer their first born to their god (Ezek. xx., 26). The Israelites, like the other "shepherds," passed in the eyes of the Egyptians for worshippers of the evil principle, of Set, slayer of Osiris. In all the history of religions there is no human sacrifice better established than that of the daughter of Jephthah to Iahveh. How would the same sacrifice have differed if offered to Moloch ? In the time of the Judges, who does not know the story of Samuel and Agag ? It is "before Iahveh" at Guilgal, that Samuel kills this victim. David appeased the wrath of Iahveh who had afflicted the land with famine during three years, by delivering up to the Gibeonites seven men of Saul's blood. The seven victims being hanged "in the hill before Iahveh," the deity was satisfied (2 Samuel xxi., 1—14). It follows from a passage in Micah that, in the eighth century, expiatory virtue was attached to the sacrifice of the first born : "Shall I give my first born for my transgression?" (Micah vi., 7 ; cf. Levit. xviii., 21 ; Deut. xii., 31 ; xviii., 10.) During the whole time of the monarchy, sacrifices of the same kind were offered in the kingdoms of Israel and of Judah, especially in the valley of Ben-Hinnôm, near Jerusalem, to the south of the mountain of Sion. It was no longer to Iahveh that they were offered ; Iahveh now became the god of the great spiritualistic prophets of Judah, although in his own temple of Jerusalem the worships of Baal and Aschera were almost constantly associated with him.

Numerous passages in the Bible shew that it was not merely a question of making the children pass through the fire, but of giving them as food to the flames. Later, after the Babylonish captivity, when Jahvinistic monotheism had triumphed, certain expressions were softened down, which might have scandalised pious Jews assembled in the synagogues on the Sabbath day for the hearing of the scriptures. Parallel passages, like 2 Chron. xxviii., 1—4, and 2 Kings xvi., 3, prove that the biblical text has undergone modification of this

kind. In one it is stated that Ahaz, the king of Judah, "burnt his children in the fire," in the other he only makes "his son pass through the fire." The sacred legends, at need, suggested these sacrifices to kings and people. Eusebius has preserved a fragment of the history of Phœnicia by Philo of Byblos, in which Kronos, called El by the Phœnicians, sacrifices his only son to turn away the perils of the war which was menacing the countries under his sway. Mescha, the king of Moab, did the same thing, when he sacrificed his eldest born to Kemosh under similar circumstances (2 Kings iii., 27); for all the forms of Moloch—as the Milcom of the Ammonites, the Kemosh of the Moabites, to whom Solomon built temples on the hills of Jerusalem, or as the Adrammelech and Anammelech of the captive Chaldeans and Suzians transported by Sennacherib into Samaria*—all these local forms of Moloch had their devouring piles and their valleys of Ben-Hinnôm.

Was circumcision, which, like the sacrifice, took place on the eighth day after birth, a bloody sacrifice intended to propitiate the deity? It appears in contradistinction to the opinion of Moses, that the rite of circumcision is not a relic of the worship of Moloch. Those who cling to the letter of the Biblical text, in which this custom is mentioned before the entry of the Abrahamides into Egypt, refuse to recognise any Egyptian influence in the matter. But Herodotus (ii., 36, 101) alleges that, by their own confession, the Phœnicians and the Syrians of Palestine, and, therefore, the Hebrews, had received from Egypt the rite of circumcision. So long as the existence of this custom is not proved in a Semitic nation more ancient than Egypt and entirely without communication with the land of Mitsraïm, the only probable solution of the problem is that of Herodotus. On the contrary, the rites

*All the names, save one, of the populations thus transported into Palestine, has been found in the cuneiform inscriptions. They are all in connexion with the last campaigns of Sennacherib against Suzub, and with the expedition of the same Assyrian monarch into Elam, B.C. 687. See François Lenormant, "Lettres assyrio-logiques," 1, 63, *et seq.*

of consecration to Iahveh, and of the redemption of all the first born (Ex. xiii., 13; xxii., 29, 30; Numb. iii., 13; xviii., 15, etc.), arise very clearly from the historical transformations of the worship of this god, to whom were sacrificed, as to the absolute master, the lord of the soil and of the inhabitants, all the first born males of men and animals with the first-fruits of the earth. Even the word itself, the verb which elsewhere signifies "to burn," or, according to others, to "pass through the fire," the victims offered to Moloch, is here used for "to offer," "to sanctify" the first born to Iahveh.* The worship of Iahveh, which only became centralised at Jerusalem in later times, and for purely political reasons, was chiefly celebrated on mountains and on the natural or artificial hills, crowned with little temples or with simple chapels, which were called *bāmôth*. During the whole time of the Judges, especially, it was to these high places that the people went up to consult the seers and adore Iahveh, often associated with Baal, Aschera, and Moloch. Iahveh was, indeed, as said the Syrians, a "god of the hills." It was on one of the mountains of the land of Moriah that Abraham was to sacrifice to Iahveh his only son; Moses received the tables of the law on Mount Sinai. Sion, which, like Sinai and Horeb, is called the "mount of god," was selected for the foundations of the temple. It was on the tops of mountains that Bileam (Balaam) prophesied and sacrificed to Iahveh. Lastly, it was on the mount of Hor that this god called Aharon (Aaron) from this life, and on Horeb that he appeared to Elijah (Numb. xx., xxiii.; 1 Kings, xix., 8). The prophet Micah (i., 3) points us to Iahveh as he "cometh forth out of his place, and will come down and tread upon the high places of the earth." Now we know that it was on the hills that were found the "high places" of Moloch. Thus, in the valley of Ben-Hinnôm the Hebrews had built *bāmôth* in his honor (Jer. vii., 31). Solomon had already built regular temples to Milcom or Moloch of the Ammonites, and to the other divinities of the Syro-Phœnician Pantheon

* Ex. xiii., 12; cf. "Revue de Théologie," pp. 194, 205.

on the hill-tops of Jerusalem (1 Kings xi., 5, 7 ; 2 Kings xxiii., 13) ; these sanctuaries, with their bloody and voluptuous rites, with their priests and crowds of devotees, dominated the city during all the reigns of the kings of Judah ; they existed in the days of Josiah.

Many other traits common to Iahveh and to Moloch might be noted. But these two divinities, in spite of a thousand resemblances, will always remain distinct, as they originally were.

CHAPTER VII.

THE god who had most altars and temples in Palestine, beside Iahveh and Moloch, was unquestionably Baal. During the time of the Judges and Samuel, that is, during almost two centuries, the worshippers of Iahveh associated to that of the national god the adoration of Baal and Aschera. If we find the name of Iahveh in the proper names of this period, as Joas, Jotham, Jonathan, etc., we also find that of Baal. Saul, the anointed of Iahveh, gives to two of his sons the names of Esbaal and Jonathan, and the son of Jonathan is in turn named Meribbaal. Under idolatrous and frankly polytheistic kings like Solomon and his successors, the worship of Baal and Aschera was undoubtedly the most popular in the two kingdoms of the North and South. During the reign of Achab (Ahab), the famous prophet or *nabi* of Iahveh, Elijah, faces by himself four hundred and fifty *nabis* of Baal and four hundred *nabis* of Aschera. Jezabel and Athaliah—so ill-used by the Jahvistic editors of the books of Kings and Chronicles—loved to surround themselves with the priests and priestesses of these joyous and naively sensual deities. The symbols and the rites of Baal and Aschera were very often introduced into the very temple of Iahveh in Jerusalem (2 Kings xxiii.). A pietistic king like Hezekiah, who destroyed the high places, broke in pieces the tablets of Baal, and cut down or burned the symbols of Aschera, was succeeded by less intolerant and more politic kings, like Manasseh and Ammon, who, in order not to wound the faith of the majority, rebuilt the high places, replaced Aschera in the temple of Jerusalem, and re-established the worship of Baal. It was in vain that Josiah, the blind tool of the sacerdotal *coup d'état* of Hilkiah, threw down all that Manasseh had raised. This petty Hebrew king,

his brain confused by the conjuring books of his high priest, had he not the audacity to provoke Neko II., a Pharaoh of Egypt? The man who had slain all the priests of Baal even to the cities of Samaria, was none the more protected by his god Iahveh, for he lay among the dead in the valley of Megiddo.

After the religious terror of the reign of Josiah, polytheism, and especially the worship of Baal, revived with striking splendor, as is witnessed by every page of Habakkuk, Zechariah (xii.—xiv.), Jeremiah and Ezekiel. "According to the number of thy cities were thy gods, O, Judah," cries Jeremiah in the reign of Jehoiakim; "and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem have ye set up altars to that shameful thing, even altars to burn incense unto Baal" (xi., 13). The prophets of Samaria prophesied more than ever in the name of Baal. The more constant communications of the Hebrews with Phœnicia, Egypt, and Assyria, the exchange of religious ideas, the profound scepticism of the wise who, like the author of the book of Job, no longer believed in the necessary connexion between piety and happiness, and for whom Iahveh, his heaven and his Satan were no longer aught save poetical images—all seemed in a conspiracy to annihilate the work of the great religious reformers of the seventh and eighth centuries. Happy in the mere fact of existence, careless of the future, drinking his wine gaily under his vine, amid the bacchic songs (Amos vi., 5; Is. v., 12) and the lascivious dances of the daughters of Syria, the voluptuous son of Jacob was so thoroughly Pagan, that the prophet, in despair of any triumph over these inveterate habits of idolatry, cried in his discouragement: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots" (Jerem. xiii., 23)?

Those who have read the Bible, and especially the older books in it, know that we meet there with people going up to the high places or coming down from them, prophets and seers at their head, preceded by players on the flute, lute, harp, and tabor. Every hill shaded by a grove of trees, by woods of oaks, or terebinths, was a "high-place," a *bdmsh*, where the tablet

of Baal was erected beside the pillar of Aschera. We have already mentioned the blocks of stone raised on the mountains, to which were attached certain legends from mythological and heroic times. On these mountains temples were built. Priests offered sacrifice there. The people ascended thither to offer victims and incense to Iahveh and the other gods, especially to Baal and Aschera. This went on until the reign of Josiah, or rather until the time of the captivity (B.C. 586). In the age of Samuel, the most famous high places were Ramah, Gilgal, Beth-El, and Mizpah. The sanctuary of the high place was often no temple of stone, but a mere tent. On the altars of Baal rose cippi of stone, images of the sun, shaped like a cone or pyramid, and symbolising a flame (*chammānim*). The mention of these columns is almost always accompanied by that of the *ascherim*, symbols of Aschera.

The mountain belonged to Baal, the grove to Aschera. Baal, or Bel, is the "lord," the "master of heaven," Baal-Schammain, as he was called by all people of the Semitic race, Baal-Chammān, as he is named in the inscriptions of Carthage; fundamentally he signifies the sun,* no longer regarded as Moloch, that is as the god of the destruction and death in nature, but as the father of life, as the supreme dispenser of light and heat, as the principle and cause of the renewing which yearly clothes the earth with luxuriant vegetation.

This God was not the ancient Baal, or Bel etān, to whom the town of Itanos, in Crete, ascribed its foundation, and whom the most ancient Phœnician colonies adored as "lord of the city," or Melkart. He was, on the contrary, Baal the younger, named Mardouk at Babylon, as the god of the planet Jupiter, while Bel the Ancient, as the god of the planet Saturn, was called Adar.

In truth, so far as this god was identical with the deity Bel of Babylonia, this Baal did not differ essentially from Baal the Ancient, or Moloch. His worship was very ancient among the Semites of the

* Sanchoniathon, in Eusebius (*Prepar. evang.* i., 10), and 2 Kings xxiii., 5, interpreted by Munk, "Palestine," p. 89.

West. The Hyksôs, among other divinities like Anat, Rescheph, etc., adored a god named, in the hieroglyphic inscriptions, Bar (Bal), and also Set or Sutech, that is *Sched*, "lord." The worship rendered to him much resembled that of Moloch; they sacrificed to him human victims. These Semites had received his rites from the Asiatic populations of Syria, settled in the Delta from all antiquity. Set, in fact, was adored in Egypt long before what is called the invasion of the shepherds; he was a solar divinity, a god of the devouring and mischievous sun, which dries up the Nile (Osiris). As to the Canaanites, the god they chiefly worshipped along the borders of the Mediterranean and in their colonies, as on the far-off shores of the Erythian Sea, their ancient fatherland, was either Baal or Moloch, according to the aspect under which he was considered, and this Bel did not essentially differ from the Babylonian Bel of the first triad. As the names of Bel and Moloch are not found among the Arabs, it appears that the worship of these gods did not exist at the period at which the different families of the race issued from this common cradle, central and northern Arabia.

In the course of centuries Baal and Moloch became two very distinct divinities. Baal is never called Moloch, and if we except the Baal of Carthage and some others, human victims are never sacrificed to him. Although, like Adôn, Baal is often a title given to all the gods, Baal is also a god, side by side with other divinities, a god of the sky, exclusively solar in origin, as is seen by Muentzer, Creuzer, Winer, Vatke, Movers, Duncker, Schrader and Baudissin; he is the god of the generative sun, whose beneficent and fertilising warmth calls into existence all that lives. This Baal, becoming Bel Mardouk at Babylon, was the Canaanitish god of the planet Jupiter under the name of Baal Gad, the "good fortune," as the Arabs called him. In the valley of Lebanon, at the foot of Hermon, Joshua conquered a town named Baal Gad.

Among the Hebrews, the influence exercised by the sun over vegetation and the fruits of the earth, such as even the vine, the olive tree and the fig tree, was

ascribed to Baal. The "cities of the sun, real Heliopolis, were by no means rare in Palestine."* In Syria, the worship of the prophet Elijah, thanks to the similitude of the names, replaced in many parts that of the sun. As to the Danites they openly adopted the latter worship. The story of Samson (*Schimschôn*, from *schêmesch*, sun), the Hercules of their tribe, is a solar myth. Besides the great solar myths, the primitive signification of which was lost in the lapse of time among the Semites as among the Aryans, the sun itself was adored at Jerusalem, in the temple of Iahveh. Ezekiel shows us the worshippers of the heavenly body, between the porch and the altar, their faces turned to the East, prostrate before the sun. The emblems of the god at Jerusalem were those horses and chariots of the sun, which the kings of Judah had placed at the entrance of the temple (2 Kings xxiii., 11; cf. Ezek. viii., 16; Deut. iv., 19).

Beside the ancient Baal, usually designated in the Bible by the name of *hab-Baal*, with the article, there was therefore a younger Baal, who under a thousand different forms represented the beneficent action of the sun upon the earth. According to the special characteristics attributed to him by the popular faith was the different surname borne by the god. This surname further changed with the places where he had a temple. Hence these innumerable Baals in the kingdoms of Israel and Judah to which the prophet alluded when he cried: "According to the number of thy cities were thy gods, O Judah" (Jer. xi., 13). In Phœnicia also, as M. Renan has established, each town, each district had its own worship, which often only differed in words from that of the adjoining; but these words had their value. *Nomina numina*. Thus Baal-Berith, worshipped at Sichem, was the god or Baal who protected the political alliance of the tribes. Baal-Zeboub—the Beelzebub of the gospels, wherein the ancient deity is no longer anything more than a devil—was a famous oracle at Ekron, in the land of the Philistines. Baal-

* In the territory of the tribes of Judah, Naphthali and Issachar. See Jos. xv., 10; xix., 22, 28; Jud. i., 33.

Peor was the Baal adored on the mountain of that name - if we except the worship of Aschera, of which we shall speak presently, never had a deity rites more naturalistic. The other local forms of Baal, such as Baal-Hamon, Baal-Hazor, Baal-Meon, Baal-Peratsim, etc., were very numerous. The name of the divinity who was the replica of Baal, his spouse Baalath, is also met with more than once in the geography of Palestine, and attests the extent and importance of her worship. Let us cite only Baalath-Beer, or, as we should say, "Our Lady of the Well." The inscriptions further introduce us to Jarhibol, or Jereah-Baal, Baal united to the moon (Astarte), Aglibol or Egel-Baal, Baal adored in the form of a young bull, etc. On the sculptured monuments we find Baal in the form of a bull and Aschera in that of a cow. In the time of the Seleucides, the age of Antiochus Epiphanes, images of the god were carved which recall Hellenic Zeus seated on his throne with his eagle, and images of Ashteroth whose head is crowned with towers.

But one of the most popular forms of Baal, in so far as he represents the yearly course of the sun, was that of Adonis (Adôn, Adonai), or rather of Tammouz. Adôn, in fact, is merely a divine title which may designate any of the gods without distinction; it has not yet been found as a divine proper name in the inscriptions of Phœnicia. The god worshipped in the land of Lebanon whom the Greeks called *Adonis* was certainly *Elioun*, the "Most High." We must say as much of Tammouz, also designated by the name of *Adonis*. It was for a long time doubtful whether Tammouz, whose name was borne by one of the months in the common calendar of the Assyro-Babylonians, Syrians and Jews, was an original god of Babylonia; the fact is henceforth established by the late discoveries of the Assyriologists. Like many other of the divinities accepted into the Pantheon of the Semites of Babylonia, Tammouz is an ancient Accadian deity, whose name in this language signifies "son of life," or "Divine offspring." *

* *Dumu*, or *dû*, son, and *zi*, life.

Before being the lover of Baalath of Bylos, he was the husband of Istar. He plays an important part in the cycle of the Babylonian epopee: it is in search of him that Istar descends into hell. Tammouz, the son of a Phœnician king named Kuthar (Cinyras?) appears, in the Syriac version of the apology of Melito, as the lover of the Baalath of Gebal or Byblos buried in Aphaca.* The festivals of mourning, the "lamentations of Adonis," were then properly those of Tammouz. The cause of the confusion is that the most ancient sources from which has been drawn all that is known of the worship of Adonis in Syria, Phœnicia and Egypt are all Greek, and do not go back with certitude beyond the seventh century. The funeral rites of this god had chiefly struck the imagination of the Hellenes. The chant of sorrow and the legend of Linos grew, as often happens, out of some half-understood words of the lamentations of Adonis.†

Semitic religions have been familiar with these gods, young and fair as adolescents, dying in autumn and rising again in spring. In Palestine, even in Jerusalem itself, were chanted the Adonaïs. "There sat women weeping for Tammouz," says Ezekiel, speaking of the temple. This worship must have struck deep root into Judea, for it survived the destruction of the two temples of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Israelites throughout the world. St. Jerome wrote to Paulinus in A.D. 396 of the monastery at Bethlehem, that "the lover of Venus was mourned in the grotto where Christ wailed as an infant" (Epis. 49). Again, he speaks of a grove sacred to Tammouz in the neighborhood of Bethlehem. In the Bible this god is generally designated "the only son" (Amos viii., 10; Zach. xii., 10; Jer. vi., 26; cf. Gen. xxii., 2, etc., and 2 Chron. xxxv., 25). The funeral lamentations over

* *Melitonis Apol. ad Marc. Aurel. Fragmentum*, e syriaco vertil. E. Renan, pp. 8, 9.

† Cf. what Herodotus (ii., 79) reports about *Mavepās*, who appears to have been the only son of the first king of Egypt, and whose early death was mourned by the Egyptians similarly to Linos. Maneros, according to Brugsch, is not a name; they are the words of a funeral refrain which the Egyptians chanted over Osiris.

"the only son" were a universal feast of mourning, especially among women, who amid the sobs and the cries of the weepers, repeated as the refrain of a litany: "Ah lord! ah his glory!" (Jer. xxii., 18; cf. xxxiv., 5.) These lamentations had passed into "a custom in Israel." Thus the maidens of Israel yearly mourned during four days for the "only" daughter of Jephthah, worshipped as a goddess by the Samaritans.*

But the most revered temples of the god were raised in the valley of the river Adonis, at Byblos, the holy city of pilgrimage, among those populations of Lebanon who appear to have been more nearly related to the Hebrews than were the Canaanites of Tyre, Sidon and Aradus. In an admirable passage of his "*Mission de Phénicie*," M. Renan has described these mountains of Lebanon, their "laughing Alps," and the present inhabitants of the land of Byblos, quick, intelligent, good-natured, sensual, among whom we see "types of reversion" as in Egypt. "The infinite charm of nature," he says, writing of this country, "leads ever to the thought of death, not conceived of as cruel, but as a kind of perilous attraction to which one yields and slumbers. Thus religious emotions hover between pleasure, sleep and tears. Even at the present time the Syrian hymns sung in honor of the Virgin are a kind of tearful sigh, a strange sob."† In the valley there still exist numerous ruins of the "tombs of Adonis," a kind of "Holy Sepulchre," whither the women of the ancient mysteries, in the intoxication of a voluptuous grief, came to cover with tears and kisses the cenotaph of the beautiful youth, whom a savage beast, a bear or a wild boar, had slain in the mountains, and whose blood reddened the waters of the river; even to-day, after the rains, the Nahr-Ibrahim has yearly a reddish tinge. The piety of the people of Lebanon had certainly localised the death of Adonis in various spots. At Ghineh we may see sculptured the passion of the god on two tablets of rock. Here, a man dressed in a short

* Movers, "*Die Phœn.*," i., 248. Cf. Judg. xi., 34.

† *Mission de Phénicie*, p. 216.

tunic, his lance in rest, receives the charge of a bear. There a woman is seated in a posture of mourning. It is Baalath, the inconsolable wife of the god of life and light, "the great goddess," "the celestial goddess," as she is called in the inscriptions of Syria; it is the inconsolable mistress, fevered with passionate desire, who will not and cannot believe in the death of her beloved, and who seeks her Adonis everywhere, as Isis her Osiris, Cybele her Atys.

The feast of Adonis took place in Byblos after the harvest, in autumn, when the sun from the far-off sky but sends down some pale rays to nature in mourning. To represent symbolically the death of the god, at Alexandria, as at Athens, women planted in pots lettuce, barley and fennel, and exposed the plants on the terraces of the houses. Soon faded and withered, these flowers were the symbols of the dead god. In the temples, clouds of incense rose around the funeral pyre where, on carpets "softer than sleep," lay the image of Adonis, embalmed with bitter-smelling myrrh and enervating aromatic herbs. Later, the god was lowered into a tomb. On the seventh day Adonis rose from the dead, if the resurrection followed immediately the vigil of grief, and then burst out those cries of delirious joy which in the East succeed so quickly to groans and sobs. Every woman, and not only the mourners for Adonis, was obliged to sacrifice her hair to the god, or to abandon herself to strangers during a whole day, consecrating to Baalath the guerdon of the hallowed prostitution.

As the god of spring, Adonis had a second feast, to which the month of May (*iyar*) was dedicated. The devouring heat of June—the month which among the Arameans was called *haziran*, the month of the wild boar, the adversary of Adonis—slew the son of the young year, who was mourned in July under the name of Tammouz. This month bore the name of the god in the Syrian and Hebrew calendar, which, as we know, has a Chaldæo-Assyrian origin. It was this feast of Tammouz that was celebrated at Jerusalem and throughout Palestine, as well as throughout Syria and Phœnicia. The command to abstain from pork,

still in force among the Israelites and Mahommedans, is doubtless due to the myth of Adonis and Tammouz, slain by a wild boar.* That this interdict is not the result of a hygienic necessity, but the effect of a mythological idea, seems to be proved by the fact that the same custom is prevalent in all nations among whom the worship of Adonis is spread, whatever may be the soil and climate, among the Phœnicians and the Syrians as among the Arabs, among the Sabeans as in the isle of Cyprus.

* Another carnivore, a bear, as in the celebrated bas-relief of Ghineh, may replace the wild boar.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE good goddess Aschera, the Baalath of Baal, less mournful than the consort of Adonis, was not less tender nor less voluptuous. Impregnated yearly by her celestial lover, she breathes out joy, serenity, the profound peace of the mother goddesses of the Aryan race, as for instance of our Demeter. And in fact, as consort of the god of light, of warmth and life, and as wife of Baal, Aschera is nothing more than nature awaked from the heavy sleep of winter. At the warm rays of the sun of April she awakes, she listens to the rustling of innumerable germs, the seeds of the things which move within her womb, and while her body, bathed in the luminous air, clothes itself in luxuriant vegetation, she bids the fish breed in the luscious water of the harbors, and increases the ardor of the doves whose nests people the night of the cypress-trees. Like Isis, this goddess might be named "Myrionymos." At Babylon and at Nineveh she was Bilit, the wife of Bel (Bil). Here is the reason of women recovered from child-birth, lepers and others, bringing pigeons and turtle-doves to the temple.* Here is the reason why, even now, the ancient worship of fishes, once very popular throughout Syria, has been preserved in the village of Deschon and in a little Mussulman mosque near Tripoli.

Radically identical with Istar, with the Astarte of Sidon, the Tanit or Rabat-Tanit of Carthage, the Allât of the Arabs, the Baalath of the Byblos, the Derketo of

* Thus Mary, Luke ii., 24. Cf. Levit. xiv., 22; xv., 14, etc. The merchants who sold these birds were stationed in the approaches to the temple of Jerusalem; Matt. xxi., 12; Mark xi., 15; John ii., 14. It was in the form of a dove that Iahveh revealed himself at the baptism of Jesus. Matt. iii., 16; Mark i., 10; Luke iii., 21, 22.

Ascalon, the Syrian goddess of Hierapolis, and the Assyrian Mylitta (Bilit), Aschera should yet be distinguished from all her divine sisters. Among races so devoid of plastic imagination and artistic sense, the gods remained always as vague forms, undecided and floating. There is no firmness in the outlines, no certainty which can be grasped, nothing which recalls the Homeric gods. The Semitic deities resemble rather the gods of the infant Aryan race, the almost impalpable gods of the Vedas, wherein Varouna, Indra and Agni are so often confounded with each other, and where the god invoked at the moment, Indra, Savitri or Roudra, is always the greatest and the mightiest among the gods. They may be compared to the Greek Titans, to Okeanos, Helios, or Gea, or still better to the divine abstractions of the Romans, Faith, Virtue, etc. Hence it is sometimes very difficult to distinguish accurately between the various deities of the Semitic Pantheon. We see further in the Bible that El, Baal, Moloch and Iahveh were frequently confused together. Yet for mythology they are four very distinct gods. Such distinctions seem only, if we may use such an expression, to show a difference in sameness; they are mere shades and delicate, sometimes subtle approximations, but they are not arbitrary, and often rest, as in the case of Aschera, on solid geographical and historical arguments.

This goddess, whose worship was in the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, associated with that of Baal, and even with that of Iahveh (Deut. xvi., 21 ; 2 Kings xxi., 7 ; xxiii., 15 ; xvii., 16), belonged originally to the Canaanitish tribes of the south. Banished by the pietist kings, such as Hiskia (Hezekiah) and Josiah, she had nevertheless altars and worshippers everywhere—even in the temple of Jerusalem—until the time of the Babylonish captivity, for Jeremiah mentions her, and in Deuteronomy, a century after Isaiah, we find the people forbidden to raise her symbol beside the altar of Iahveh. As we do not find her name in any classic author, we may at all events conclude that the worship of Aschera had almost entirely disappeared before the Hellenic period of the East.

Astarte (Ashtoreth), who was never very popular among the Hebrews, is alone known to the Greek writers. Until Movers, Aschera and Astarte were even confused together by science. They do not indeed essentially differ. We might even conclude from two passages in the book of Judges (ii., 13 and iv., 7) that Aschera was the same as Astarte. It is also quite evident that Istar, Astarte and Aschera are three names derived from one root. If this was Semitic, the goddess must have originally symbolised "the blessed," she who gives happiness. Such is the sense of one of the surnames of Istar, "Assurit." Aschera at all points resembles Assour, the national god of Assyria. Istar or Astarte, allied to Aschera, is the pendant to Moloch and Baal; identical originally, the two divine forms diverged from each other in the course of ages until they came to express natural aspects and moral ideas which were very far apart. These divergences must be noted, but the primitive conception should never be lost sight of. Istar the Archer, with her bow, her quiver and her arrows, the warrior goddess of Askalon or of Carthage, is the daughter or sister of an ancient goddess of nature, a telluric deity, who after having personified the generative forces of nature became a lunar and planetary divinity. We have already said that at an early period Istar had replaced the god Sin as lunar deity, and that an Assyrian syllabic represents her as the goddess of the planet Venus, as the morning star. The episode in the great Assyrian epic which relates the descent of Istar into hell, shows us in the following passage that before becoming the sinister goddess of war and bleeding hetacombs, Istar presided, like Venus, over the sweet toil of love and generation, over the fertile union of all earthly living things: "Istar has descended beneath the earth and has not re-ascended Since Istar descended into hell the bull no longer seeks the cow nor the ass his mate The wife will not suffer her husband's approaches."*

The Astarte of the Phœnicians and the Aschera of

* From the Translation of M. Jules Oppert.

the Hebrews have been discovered under the title of the double Istar of Assyria, of Arbeles and of Nineveh; the warrior character of the first answers very well to that of the Astarte of Phœnicia, and the voluptuous one of the second to that of the good goddess Aschera of Palestine. These two aspects of the feminine deity of the Semites appear also in Anat, the consort goddess of Anou, who enters into the composition of a large number of the proper names of Palestine; we can study the two aspects, answering to the two sides of her divine rôle, on three Egyptian tablets of the XIXth dynasty. Here, under the names of Kadesch and of Ken, she is represented naked, in front face, like the Zarpanit of Babylon, standing on a lion passant, with one or two serpents in her left hand and a bunch of lotus in her right. There, under the name Anta, or Anata, she is clothed, helmeted and armed with lance, shield, and axe.

The books of Samuel and of Kings also show plainly that Astarte was a foreign divinity worshipped by the Phœnicians and the Philistines. Although the name of Astarte, either alone or associated with that of Baal, appears very early in the Bible (Judges x., 6, etc.) she is mentioned nowhere in the Pentateuch. The goddess was nevertheless known in very ancient times on the coasts of Syria and to the east of Jordan, where is situated the town of Aschtheroth-Karnaim, "Two-horned Astarte," mentioned in Genesis. A passage of San-choniathon represents Astarte as having a cow's head. There is no doubt that Astarte was a celestial goddess rather than a telluric divinity like Aschera. In Phœnicia, and in the Phœnician colonies, the horns of Astarte represent the crescent moon. Hence the names of "Luna regina cœli," of "Selene," and of "the celestial Aphrodite," bestowed on her by Greek and Latin writers. It was Solomon who officially, as it were, introduced the worship of Astarte into Jerusalem, and down to the time of Josiah the goddess had a temple in that city (1 Kings xi., 5, 33; 2 Kings xxiii., 13). It is certainly she who is styled by Jeremiah the "queen of heaven," *melecheth haschammaim* (vii., 18; xliv., 17). The prophet shows us children

gathering the wood, fathers kindling the fire, and the women kneading the dough to make sacrificial cakes, which they offered to the goddess with libations and incense. What are the "benedictions of the moon," still recited by the Israelites, from the seventh to the sixteenth day of every new moon, in the evening, when the moon rises, save a relic of this old nature-worship? They repeat twice over: "May this be a favorable augury for us and for all Israel!" In addressing this prayer to the new moon, the Israelite "springs forward to meet her;" he adds, his eyes ever fixed on the celestial crescent: "May terror and fear fall upon my enemies! . . . May they become immovable as the stones! . . . Selah! Selah! Selah!"

According to 1 Sam. xxxi., 10, the Philistines, who worshipped this goddess, placed in her temple the arms and the spoils of the vanquished. It was in the temple of Atargatis (Atar-Ate) or Derketo,* perhaps at Askalon, where was possibly the most ancient temple of the goddess, that the arms of Saul were placed, while, according to Chronicles (1 Chron. x., 10), the head of the hero was sent to the temple of Dagon. This strange deity, whose name clearly indicates his character and shape (*dag*, fish), was the national god of the Philistines; he had famous temples, served by a large number of priests, at Asdod, Gaza, Askalon, etc. The names of Kephar-Dagon and Beth-Dagon prove that his worship was also widely spread throughout Palestine in the time of the Judges. He was also well known to the Phenicians. We now know that this god, like Marduk, was one of the secondary forms of Bel, the demiourgos of Babylon. Among the Assyrians he was Dakan, among the Babylonians Dagon. He enters into the composition of the name of the most ancient kings of Babylon, and appears also on an antique inscription of Hammourabi, two thousand years before our era. Dagon had a head crowned with a tiara and two hands in a free condition, not attached to the body, which

* It is clearly to this goddess, and not Astarte, that the Hebrew text intends to refer.

from the trunk downwards was a fish's tail. This god has been found on Phœnician medals, on the bas-reliefs of Nineveh and Babylonian cylinders. The consort goddess, Derketo, had the same shape. We have here Semitic deities of prodigious antiquity, whose nature cannot be accurately determined without a close study of the monuments of Nineveh and Babylon.

As to Aschera, we only know her by some Hebrew texts in the Bible. We have already said that her symbol was raised in the shade of verdant trees, on hills, beside the tablet of Baal. As a telluric divinity, specially manifesting her power in vegetation, Aschera was adored chiefly in woods and forests. The worship of trees only disappeared in Syria at a very late date. If the books of Kings and of Chronicles no longer speak of it, this is not the case with the more ancient books of Judges and Samuel, or of Genesis. Every tree, every sacred grove, has a place of sacrifice in ancient times. When Abram settled under the oaks of Mamre, he built there an altar. The grove of trees planted by this patriarch at Beersheba, wherein Isaac raised an altar, had become one of the most famous centres of idolatry in the time of the prophet Amos. At Beth-El, where Iahveh was adored under the similitude of a metal bull, there was a sacred grove. In the time of Joshua the sacred ark was under the oaks and the terebinths of Sichem. It was under a tree, which was "by the sanctuary of Iahveh," that the hero set up a stone, saying, "Behold, this stone shall be a witness with us; for it hath heard all the words of Iahveh, which he spake unto us" (Josh. xxiv., 26, 27). The famous black stone of the Kaaba of the ante-Israelite Arabs also had eyes and ears. At the time of the Judges it was still under the oaks of Sichem that the Sichemites assembled to debate on public affairs. There was there a road named the road of *Elon-Meonim*, "the oaks of the magicians." The prophetess Deborah uttered oracles under a palm-tree. The rustling of trees served as an oracle to David (2 Sam. v., 24) as to all the ancients. The rustling of the tree-tops was regarded as prophetic; the knowledge of what is and of what shall be was drawn thence, as we may see

from the tree of knowledge in Genesis. The largest and tallest trees, and the evergreen ones, were adored as gods. A great many Semitic myths were connected with the vegetable world. Thus the pomegranate, famous for the richness of its fruit, was sacred to Adonis and Aphrodite. The almond, which, while nature seems inanimate, comes forth first from winter's sleep, the amygdalis, that is, the "great mother," gave birth to a crowd of Semitic legends. What, for example, is the goddess named Berouth in Sanchoniathon, the spouse of Elioun? A kind of evergreen cypress, as Movers has proved. Passages in Isaiah and Habakkuk show that among the cedars and the cypresses of Lebanon some were worshipped for their great age or for their beauty.

It is on the site of sacred groves, near venerated trees, that have been erected the temples of divinities who have been successively worshipped in these spots, from Aschera, Baal and Iahveh, down to St. George, Maroun, and Christ. In the Lebanon an ancient ruined temple is always replaced by a chapel. A secular carob-tree, a little grove of oaks or laurels, generally shelters these remains. Sozomen tells us of a pagan festival which was celebrated in the time of Constantine in the oak grove of Mamre. It was a kind of fair, to which crowds repaired, and where oxen, goats, and sheep were sacrificed with many libations and censings.* In spite of Judaism, Christianity and Islamism, the veneration of trees has remained persistent in Palestine. Travellers have always seen some of these isolated trees, to which the inhabitants paid a regular worship. It is not rare in this country to come across trees all covered with rags and strips of various stuffs. These have been hung on the branches by Arabs or Syrians in order to drive away fevers or to obtain the cure of certain diseases.

Thus in Palestine the woods belonged to the worship of Aschera. And this is the explanation of the fact that when the Bible mentions the worship of Aschera, it speaks of "green trees," of "thick trees," of oaks,

* Sozom., Hist. II, 4.

poplars, and terebinths, in the shade of which the priestesses of Aschera observed the voluptuous rites of their joyous goddess (2 Kings xvi., 4; Jer. ii., 20; Eze. xx., 28; vi., 13; Hos. iv., 13).

These sanctuaries of Aschera were charming spots, shady groves of green trees, often watered by running streams, mysterious retreats where all was silence save the cooing of the doves sacred to the goddess. The symbol of Aschera, a simple pillar, or the trunk of a tree, perhaps with its leaves and branches, was the emblem of the generative power. This symbol belonged equally, as the symbol of the fecundity of nature, to all the sister goddesses of Aschera, to Astarte, to the Syrian goddess, to the goddess of Cyprus, etc. Aschera is the Istar of Nineveh, Istar the voluptuous, named also Asurit, "the blessed," "the good fortune."

The symbol of Aschera, if Movers is to be believed, was not less often found in Palestine, than was that of her divine sisters in Phœnicia, Syria, and among nearly all the nations of the earth. These symbolical pillars were in later times assimilated to idols, and were placed, as among the Latins, in gardens and plantations. Jeremiah and Isaiah, like Horace, make merry over these "garden gods." Those which were used for the purposes of worship were always made of wood; hence the expressions, "cut in pieces," "tear down," "burn," which are continually occurring in the Bible when the destruction of the *ascherim* is spoken of. The size of these idols must have been considerable. From the wood cut from an Aschera, which ten men aided him to pull down, Gideon built an altar on which he offered up a whole bullock in sacrifice; but later, under the kings of Judah and of Israel, the symbol of Aschera became an object of general piety which was found in every house. Thus, in the provinces of France, we still find gigantic crosses on the high roads, on the crossways of the woods which serve as resting places at the Fête-Dieu, while, under the porches of churches, vendors of religious gimcracks still sell little Christs in wood or metal for a few half-pence. The rich women of Israel, the *bourgeoises* of Jerusalem, wore the symbols of Aschera in gold or silver, a sort of medals of the

Virgin of the time, which were at once jewels and objects of devotion (Eze. xvi., 17). This worship has always been specially affected by women, as is testified by the history of queen Maachah. The son, or grandson of this queen, Asa, a pietist king of Judah, brutally cut in pieces and burned in the valley of Cedron the idol which this pious princess had had made to Aschera.* In the spring, as in Rogation time with us, long processions of priests and hieroduli carried through the fields wherein the corn was beginning to sprout, the *vaos* of Adonis, represented by a symbol of the same kind.

* 1 Kings xv., 13. Jerome translates the Hebrew name of this symbol of Aschera (*niphletseth*) as *simulacrum Priapi*, and Movers by *pudendum*.

CHAPTER IX.

AFTER human sacrifices, the primitive religion of the Beni-Israel is most essentially characterised by sanctified prostitution. This has naturally been the case with all the families of Semitic race, but we will only deal with the Jews and the Syrians. It is certainly not without reason that, in Deuteronomy (xxiii., 17), a book of edifying piety, written a few years before the Babylonish captivity, prostitution is forbidden to the sons and daughters of Israel. Never had human race a more voluptuous character.* It is allied at once to the dove and to the fish by its salacity and its enormous fecundity. It is a wonder that it has not yet covered the globe.

The Jewess is full of naïve immodesty, her lip red with desire, her eye moist and singularly luminous in the shade. Yearning with voluptuousness, superb in her triumphs, or merely feline and caressing, she is ever the "insatiable," the woman "with seven devils" of whom the scripture speaks, a kind of burning furnace in which the blond Teuton melts like wax. So far as in her lay, the Syrian woman, with her supple and nervous arms, drew into the tomb the last exhausted sons of Greece and Rome. But who can describe the grace and the soft languor of these daughters of Syria, their large black eyes, the warm bistre tints of their skin? All the poets of the decadence, Catullus, Tibullus, Propertius, have sung this wondrous being. With soft and humble voice, languid and as though crushed by some hidden ill, dragging her limbs over the tiles of a gynæcium, she might have been regarded as a stupid slave. Often, her gaze lost in long reveries, she seemed dead, save that her bosom began to swell, her

* Tacitus, Hist. v., 5, *Projectissima ad libidinem gens.*

eye lighted up, her breath quickened, her cheeks became covered with crimson. The reverie becoming a reality by a matchless power of invocation and desire, such is the sacred disease which, thanks to Mary of Magdalene, gave birth to Christianity; such, in any case, is that which has rendered the Syrian the most delicious instrument of pleasure that an amorous poet ever dreamed. When the heat of passion was appeased, they fell into complete exhaustion, and while their faces were bathed in involuntary tears, their lips breathed out the mysterious and sorrowful lamentation of which we find an echo in the litanies of Tammouz. These girls, morbid and enfevered, were very intelligent, very quick, of consummate cleverness. Slaves yesterday, queens to-day. Like the Sulamite of the "Song of Solomon," they united the deep instinct of desire to practical business sense. Even in the midst of the most unheard-of refinements of pleasure, there was about them something solemn and religious which made of the women of this race the true, the only priestesses of love.

The tents of the sacred prostitutes were generally erected on the "high places," where sacrifices were offered, beside the tablet of Baal or Iahveh and the symbol of Aschera (Isaiah lvii., 7 *et seq.*; xxiii., 7; Eze. xxiii., 14; Hosea iv., 13). These tents were woven and ornamented with figures by the priestesses of Aschera. Robed in splendid garments, their tresses dripping with perfumes, their cheeks painted with vermillion, their eyes black-circled with antimony, their eyelashes lengthened with a compound of gums, musk and ebony, the priestesses awaited the worshippers of the goddess within these tents (Numb. xxv., 8) on spacious beds (Isaiah lvii., 8); they fixed their own price and conditions, and poured the money into the treasury of the temple. On feast-days the pilgrims resorted in crowds to the sanctuary and visited the tents. Often the priestesses of Aschera was not attached to the temple. Seated at the crossways in towns, by the sides of roads, their foreheads bound with a cord, they yielded themselves to any passer-by, and dedicated to the goddess the goat or the money given

to them by the stranger (Gen. xxxviii., 14 ; Jer. iii., 2). The goat was the animal offered to the goddess by the prostitutes of all the temples ; but the present more often consisted in a piece of silver, as at Babylon, where the stranger, throwing it into their laps, said : " May Bilit protect thee ! " * In the letter entitled " Of Jeremiah " (v., 42) we see these women seated in long files in the roads. When one of them was chosen, she jeered at those of her companions whose cords had not yet been broken. Often sterile women vowed themselves to the service of the goddess in the hope of becoming mothers.

Goddess of the fertile earth, Aschera was also the goddess of conception. M. François Lenormant has remarked that the Mylitta of Herodotus, who appears to us to be Bilit, very accurately reproduces the epithet of Mulidit, " the generatrix," borne by the great nature goddess of Assyria, Bilit, the mother of all gods and all beings. Considered as Mulidit, Belit, in the religion of Babylon, was confused with Zarpanit or Zirbanit, " the producer of germs," associated as spouse with Bel Mardouk. On the Babylonian cylinders Zarpanit is represented naked, always facing the spectator, with her two hands on her breast. This goddess, to whom were consecrated the holy orgies of women in Babylonia, is also invoked as presiding over childbirth, and her attributes as Lucina made Diodorus of Sicily identify her with Hera. In the inscription discovered at Babylon in the ruins of the goddess' temple, we read a prayer, translated by M. Oppert, which fully bears out this character : " Make fertile the seed, within the womb protect the embryo until its full term, and preside over the delivery." The temple of Zarpanit was a kind of caravansery, a vast building furnished with cells wherein the Babylonian women surrendered themselves. Cells of the same kind, serving the same purpose, existed at Jerusalem in the very temple of Iahveh, wherein Aschera had her symbol and was adored. " He (Josiah) broke down the houses of the Sodomites (*kedeschim*) that were by

* Herod L., 199.

the house of the lord, where the women wove hangings for Aschera" (2 Kings xxiii., 7).

Prostitutes, as we see, were of both sexes. The men were called *kedeschim*, the women *kedeschoth*—that is, "holy, vowed, consecrated." Deuteronomy bears witness that both the one and the other brought the hire of their prostitution into the treasury of the temple of Iahveh (xxiii., 18). This paid in part the expenses of worship at Jerusalem, as at Byblos, Carthage, Paphos and Hierapolis. These expenses must have been enormous, if we judge by the sumptuous character of the religious ceremonies, and by the almost infinite number of priests of every rank and of hieroduli of both sexes. At Comana and Cappadocia, Strabon saw no less than six thousand. In Armenia and in the neighboring countries—where the worship of Anaïtis, the Babylonian Anat, the spouse of Anou, travelling northwards with the influence of the Chaldæo-Assyrian civilisation, had attained a development as great as at Comana in Cappadocia—at Comana of Pontus and at Zeta, the goddess owned a large territory around her temple, cultivated by numerous slaves of both sexes, the hieroduli, or serfs of the goddess. The worship of Anaïtis was accompanied with sacred prostitution like that of Babylon.

There were several orders of priests. At the head of the hierarchy was a high priest, standing second only to the king, as at Comana in Cappadocia, whose dignity was often hereditary, as among the Hebrews and in Phœnicia and Paphos. Then came the priests, or soothsayers; then all those who, like the Levites of Israel, filled the inferior offices in the temple, the singers, the players on flute, harp, or "kinnor," those who hewed and split up the wood for the piles on which the flesh of the victims was burned, those who drew water for the lustrations, etc., and lastly the *netinim*, or slaves of the temple. The priests of each important sanctuary held absolute possession of one or more towns, with considerable domains, which attached to them a population of laborers and shepherds, vassals of the temple. We know that the Levites might reside in a large number of towns situated in the territory of

the tribes of Israel, with the right of pasturage without the walls of each of these towns. They possessed forty-two towns and six cities of refuge. They received, further, a tithe of the fruits of fields and gardens and of domestic animals.

Among the priests, some lived in the temple, others wandered about in the country and the towns, taking service where they could (Jud. xvii., xviii.) ; for, in ancient times, each head of a family who could afford to have in his house one or more priests did not fail to do so. Micah hired one, a Levite from Bethlehem of Judah, for ten pieces of silver *per annum*. Micah had beneath his roof a molten image, doubtless a metal bull, an ephod and teraphim, so that by the people around him, his house was looked on as "a house of gods," Beth-Elohim. But the bands of hieroduli were chiefly composed of kedeschim. These sodomites, expelled several times from the kingdom of Judah by pietist princes, like Asa and Jehoshaphat, were yet found there in great numbers during the latter days of the kings, since Deuteronomy speaks of them as dwelling in the very temple of Jerusalem. The holy book bestows on these devotees of Aschera the significant title of "dogs." These sacred eunuchs wore female garments of brilliant colors, a turban of linen or of yellow silk, painted their faces, and put antimony round their eyes. They tried to resemble women in everything. Their soft attitudes, their lascivious and tempting manner, went so far as sometimes to deceive the bystanders.* Who is ignorant of the myth of Hercules and Omphale? Who does not know that the union of Adonis and Astarte was represented by hermaphrodite images? The Aphrodite of Cyprus had a beard. Hence the command in Deuteronomy (xxii., 5) : "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment."

The *kedeschim* went through the towns and cities, preceded always by players of flutes and musicians blowing trumpets. With arms naked to the shoulder, they brandished knives, whips, garnished with bones, in-

* Augustine, *De civit. Dei.*, viii., 26.

struments of penance, and danced in the roads to the sound of barbarous music from flutes, rattles, zithers, fifes, cymbals and drums. Arrived at the courtyard of a farm, or on some public place, they began to utter howls, and head downward, and neck contorted, they slashed their arms with knives. Then the most excited of the band, dripping with blood, began to prophesy (1 Kings xviii., 28). The affair concluded by a quest in which the *kedeschim* collected figs, oil, cheese and coins. The female *hierodulæ*, the *kedeschoth*, also went about the country playing dulcimers, cymbals and double flutes. The Syrian women have always had the reputation of being good musicians. These kinds of dancing girls appear to have been very numerous in the towns of Phœnicia and Judea. Isaiah (xxiii., 16) has preserved for us a fragment of a popular song composed upon them : "Take thy harp, go about the city, thou harlot that hast been forgotten ; make sweet melody, sing many songs, that thou mayest be remembered."

CHAPTER X.

WE have endeavored to show that the primitive religion of the Beni-Israel, like that of Chaldea and Assyria, was a naturalistic religion in which the siderial element predominated. Yet we have said nothing of the worship of the stars and of the signs of the zodiac, or "celestial houses," which the people of Iahveh adored on the terraces of their houses and in the very porches of the temple of Jerusalem, as their neighbors adored them on the banks of the Tigris and the Euphrates. Among the deities who, in the Chaldæo-Assyrian religious system, are ranked below Baal, there have been discovered the god of the lot, Manu, associated with the goddess of fortune, Gad, mentioned by Isaiah; Bau, who is clearly the Chaos of Genesis; Usu, the Esau of the mythological period of the Bible; Kimmuth, the god of the constellation of the serpent, or rather of the Pleiades, of the book of Job, etc. We have said nothing of the sacred streams which, like the Adonis of Byblos and the Belus of Acre, bore the name of a divinity. Leprosy was cured by plunging seven times into the waters of Jordan (2 Kings v., 10, 12, 14). We have said nothing of Lake Meron, nor of the other lakes consecrated to the goddesses of Askalon and Hierapolis, nor of the venerated source of the Jordan, nor of other springs in Palestine equally sacred. We have recalled the fact that sacrifices were offered on hills and on mountains, and that all the famous temples of the Semites were built on heights; but we have scarcely mentioned Moriah, Tabor, Horeb, and all those sacred mounts whereupon Iahveh revealed himself to his worshippers in flame. He dwells for ever on the hill of Basan (Psalm lxxviii., 16). He reveals himself in all his majesty to the eyes of man in the rocks of the cape Theou-Protosopon

(Phaniel or Phanuel) "the face of El." A spur of Anti-Lebanon, the snowy Hermon, was called the mountain of Baal Hermon (Jud. iii., 3), and even in the fourth century of the Christian era was revered as a god by the Syro-Phœnician populations. In Jewish traditions this mountain became a kind of Brocken, where, as on a Walpurgis night, the angels companied with the daughters of men. The Hebrews certainly worshipped Lebanon as a god. Carmel, where a celebrated oracle still existed in the first century, A.D., was at once, as Tacitus tells us, a mountain and a god.

Finally, after having studied the divinities of the skies, the rivers, the lakes, the springs and the mountains, we should need to rediscover, with the practices of magic and divination among the Hebrews, the remains of the fetishistic worship of animals, especially of the serpent, and search for the nature of those deities of plain and forest, the satyrs, bristled and shaggy as goats, whom Isaiah shows us bounding hither and thither in the forests, crying to each other and meeting in the solitudes (Is. xiii., 21; xxxiv., 14). Among the Semites the serpent is, *par excellence*, the intelligent animal, subtle and keen to trickery, but free from malice, wise, a good counsellor, and one from whom nature has no secrets. The Assyrian monuments seem to show that the serpent already played the part of an adviser in the Assyro-Babylonian mythology. It is no more Ahriman than it is Satan who speaks to Eve in the garden of Eden. This interpretation is relatively modern. No mischievousness is imputed to the serpent among the Semites. On the contrary, that they had faith in its medical and magic knowledge (it was then the same thing), is shown by the brazen serpent which was made by Moses in the desert to heal the Israelites of the serpent bites (Num. xxi., 4—9; 2 Kings xviii., 4), and which was used in the temple of Jerusalem down to the time of Hezekiah. The story was but a priestly legend invented to explain the presence of this idol in the temple of Iahveh, but it does not lack significance.

The Hebrews were familiar with the spectres of the morning, the demons of mid-day, the maleficent

swarms of the spirits of the night (cf. Neh. ii., 13). The Babylonian and Phœnician deities often became demons among the Jews, and later among the primitive Christians. M. François Lenormant informs us, in dealing with this subject, that in the magic formulas of the silver leaf of Jewish origin which came into the possession of the Louvre with the Campana collection, the demons of serpent-shape are called *barbar*, the Accadian title of the god Mardouk (planet Jupiter). Azazel, "the strong god," to whom, according to the ritual of the Day of Atonement (Lev. xvi., 8), was sent into the desert the goat bearing the sins of the people, was an ancient deity that was finally opposed to Iahveh as a kind of devil, incarnating the principle of evil. The Hebrews have in their mythology a monster, strange and perhaps truly Semitic, Lilith, who is also of Babylonian origin; in her we must recognise the darkness, a kind of funereal ghoul, a nocturnal hobgoblin in the form and clothing of a bride, an imp of debauchery and cruelty, who stealthily kills the children and misleads the traveller benighted in the desert, who watches him during the gloomy hour in which slumber overcomes him, twines around him her spectral arms and drinks his life in a fiery kiss.

The deciphering of the cuneiform inscriptions and the study of the monuments of Babylonia, Assyria and Phœnicia, would certainly offer many further subjects for careful consideration, if these sciences were questioned as to the most ancient cosmological myths of the Semitic peoples. The two accounts of the creation in the Hebraic Genesis, the tradition of the Deluge, the building of the Tower of Babel, the notion of the "God-law," Thouro or Thora, the ten ante-diluvian patriarchs, identical with the ten ante-diluvian kings of Babylonia, whose siderial and zodiacal character is not a matter of doubt, these are so many questions of oriental archeology, the final elements of which are all reducible to Chaldæo-Assyrian theology and mythology.

We have desired, above all things, to show in this study what was the nature of the religion and of the

national god of Israel. While setting on one side, in the name of sound methods of philology and comparative mythology, the identification of Iahveh with Moloch or with Baal, we have spoken of the rites common to all these primitive gods of Babylonia and Assyria. Perhaps it is right to insist, as has sometimes been done, on the affinities between Iahveh and Moloch, but only on condition of noting carefully the differences. Really and essentially the matter is of no importance, and Iahveh is only an empty name, like Baal and Moloch. If the worship of Moloch, or that of any other Semitic god, had developed under conditions identical with those under which was developed the worship of Iahveh, the god of the planet Saturn might then have become, like the other, the "Most High" of his tribe, the only god of his people, and then of humanity. Like the Heavenly Father of the Jews, Creator of heaven and earth, he might have given a religion to the world. For the Semites only could have converted the Aryans to monotheism, and if Israel had not converted the Gentiles, the mission would have fallen to some other people of Phœnicia or of Syria. Whichever divinity of the Semites had conquered in the secular struggle of the gods for existence and for domination, the contrast between any one of these anthropophagous deities and the god of justice and love of the Gospels could not have been greater than that which appears between the ancient atmospheric divinity of the Beni-Israel, and the god to whom a considerable portion of mankind still prays in spirit and in truth, the "God the Father" of Jesus! The most lofty task of the religious studies of the present day has been to discover the factors of this main problem of human conscience, and to show how, at the root of the great spiritual revolutions which have changed the face of the world, there is nothing more than the evolution of an idea, the outcome of a feeling, that is, in the last analysis, of an illusion.

The historians of the religion of Israel have been long misled by contemplating it in the light of the spiritualistic and almost Christian writings of the great prophets, Isaiah and Jeremiah. We now know that,

side by side with these prophets, there were others in the towns of Judah and Israel, more numerous and more influential, inspired by a religious ideal more conformed to that of the nation, which was still thoroughly polytheistic. It was not only towards worships other than that of the national god, that the monotheistic prophets of the eighth and seventh centuries took up a hostile attitude, but it was also towards the external worship paid by priests and by people to Iahveh, I mean the sacrifices, festivals, new moons, sabbaths, tithes, etc. Could they admit, these prophets, that a priest clad in an ephod should interrogate Iahveh by "Urim and Thummim"? The god who had thirsted for blood and hungered for the fat of beasts, the Iahveh to whom during centuries had been sacrificed the first born of man and beast, now knew neither hunger nor thirst. Solitary in the recesses of his heaven, he meditated vengeance upon Assyrian and Egyptian, and dreamed of the final triumph of his people over the ruins of empires. How far was he removed from the ærolite-god of the ark of the covenant! The prophets, save Jeremiah on a single occasion (iii., 16), do not even make mention of this gloomy coffer, which has held so large a space in the spiritual life of mankind.

THE END.

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